



This image shows a blank, aged, cream-colored page, likely an endpaper or flyleaf of a book. The paper has a slightly textured appearance with some minor creases and discoloration, characteristic of old paper. The left edge of the page is bound, showing the inner hinge and some stitching. The overall tone is warm and slightly yellowed.

PZ5
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1851



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Wm. S. Paine

for
Horn

of Charles

House



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J. LAMBLIN

SZADY.

The Children





CHRISTMAS BLOSSOMS

1851



PHILADELPHIA.

PUBLISHED BY E.H.BUTLER & CO.

real 5/7
CHRISTMAS BLOSSOMS,

AND

NEW YEAR'S WREATH,

FOR

M D C C C I.

BY UNCLE THOMAS.

PHILADELPHIA:
PUBLISHED BY E. H. BUTLER & CO.
1851.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1850,

BY E. H. BUTLER AND CO.

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Eastern District of
Pennsylvania.

Advertisement.

ONCE more we present our little readers with Uncle Thomas's sayings and doings for another Christmas and New Year. Some of the young friends of whom we had to tell in former years have grown too old to mingle with our sports this season: but Uncle Thomas never grows old; and as fast as the boys and girls who used to hang around him, to listen to his entertaining stories and look at his beautiful pictures, get ready for college or quit school and come home to help their mothers, he is sure to find another set ready to take their places. We have no doubt that when our little patrons draw forth, from their well-stored stockings, the Blossoms of 1851, they will find them just as bright and just as sweet as they were five years ago, when we first became acquainted.

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CHRISTMAS BLOSSOMS.

THE JOURNEY;

OR, UNCLE THOMAS'S HOLIDAY DOINGS.

MY little readers have heard and read so much about Uncle Thomas, in the Christmas Blossoms of the last four years, that they need no introduction to him now, I am sure. He is the same old Uncle Thomas that he always was, except that his head is somewhat more gray and his forehead a good deal more wrinkled than it used to be.

I do not think the young folks like him any the less on that account, however; and it seems that, the older he grows, the better he loves *them*. Nothing would delight him more than to have them all col-

lected together, in the summer vacation, at a nice little picnic party somewhere in the country, where they could pull off their shoes and stockings and romp over the green lawn, or paddle about to their heart's content in the brook, like so many colts in a clover field, or young ducks in a pond. But this, you know, can never be, for there are some six or eight millions of you in the country, enough to cover a lawn that would stretch far out of sight, both ways, and drink up the largest brook in the world, so as not to leave a drop to paddle in. He could not shake hands with half of you, before another vacation would come; and before he had said "How d'ye do" to the whole company, there would be another set grown up, and waiting, that it would take him another year to welcome; for, you know, Uncle Thomas is never partial, and as he has no children of his own, there is no reason why he should love one more than another.

But Uncle Thomas has no idea of being deprived of his Christmas amusements on that account, and as he cannot enable you all to enjoy your share of them in any other way, he has made up his mind to *print*

his sayings and doings at last Christmas in another volume of the Christmas Blossoms.

What a wonderful thing printing is! It seems hard to understand how the world could have got along so long and so well without it, before the art of printing was invented—and that was only about four hundred years ago! All books were then written with a pen, or with a stick, called a style, dipped in ink; except in China and other parts of the East Indies; where they still use a little brush, and a kind of paint (India ink), when writing. In those olden days, people wrote terrible big books sometimes, but it took a large share of a man's life to make only a few copies of such volumes. Books were therefore so dear that one who owned a dozen of them might be considered fortunate, and men sometimes travelled thousands of miles, across oceans and deserts, to see and read the works of a celebrated author, instead of writing a letter to their bookseller, and getting a copy by express, for a few cents or dollars, as we do now-a-days.

Even after printing was invented, it was, for a long time, so costly that books were often bound with

strong iron rings fastened to the leather, and were fixed to the walls of the library or the sides of the book-cases, by means of iron chains, for fear they should be stolen. How happy, then, Uncle Thomas should be that he can now print his Christmas Blossoms, and send them all over the country so cheaply that everybody can easily get to see them! He can now talk to six millions of little boys and girls, and shake hands with them on paper all at once, without asking Major Jack Downing or anybody else to shake hands for him, when he is tired out,—as the story-tellers say President Jackson had to do, when he went through the country, trying to shake hands with everybody. How happy he would be, if he thought that he could give every one of you a single hour of amusement and happiness, and make each one a little better and a little wiser, by his good sayings and his merry lessons. Just think of the amount of good he would accomplish! Six millions of hours spent in pleasure and profit at the same time! Why, that is more than six hundred and eighty-four years!—amusement and happiness enough to supply twelve men, sixteen hours a day, all their lives, if they lived

to be more than eighty years old, and if they had nothing else to do, but to eat, and drink, and sleep, and read the Christmas Blossoms!

But it is time to tell you how Uncle Thomas passed his last Christmas. Mr. and Mrs. Thompson (you remember the Thompsons) were going to pass the winter in the West Indies, for the benefit of Stella's health; for, the doctors thought she was too delicate to bear the cold winter weather. So Uncle Thomas wrote to his friend Harry Williams, who lived in the beautiful valley of Wyoming, away up the Susquehanna, and told him that if he had no objections, he would "come up" and pass the Christmas holidays with him and his wife, and have a romp with the little ones; for, old as he is, Uncle Thomas is as lively as a kitten, when he gets among the children.

This letter was written in July, and Mr. Williams immediately answered it, telling Uncle Thomas that the little folks went almost crazy with delight, at the thought of seeing him: and Mrs. Williams—(I wish you knew Mrs. Williams! She is the sweetest little woman, and so fond of children! And they are so fond of her! Her boy Charlie,—Charlie is eight years old—

declares, he will never marry anybody but his mother, if he lives to be as old as his grandfather, for there is nobody in the world like her; and, sure, Charlie ought to know, if anybody does),—well, Mrs. Williams added a postscript to the letter, in which she earnestly requested Uncle Thomas to bring with him the two dear little strangers from the West, of whom you read in the Blossoms of last year: Mary and Emma Somers.

Somewhere about the end of October, another letter was received from Mr. Williams, (who, I forgot to tell you, was a great artist,) complaining that his house was all thrown into confusion by the youngsters, in their excitement in anticipation of the visit. Every afternoon some small table, trunk, or other piece of furniture, was dragged into the middle of the floor, to serve for an “omnibus;” and chairs, to serve for horses, were harnessed to it with twine, or strips of list or ribands, or anything that came to hand from mother’s rag-bag or work-basket. Charlie and Annie would then mount behind, and dear little Willie in front, whip in hand, and away they would go to town, in fancy at least, to bring up Uncle Thomas for Christmas.

It is true, the patent "omnibus" made no progress, though Willie lashed the horses with all his might, and kicked at the lazy things till his shoe flew off, and, on one occasion, his stocking too. Charlie was the guard of the coach, and carried the stars and stripes, to mark his office—for Charlie loves the stars and stripes, as every American lad should; and Annie never travelled without her doll, for she thought she loved it almost as much as her mother loved her.

"You have no idea, my friend," said Mr. Williams in his letter, "you can have no idea how constantly the thought of your visit possesses the minds of our little troop; and, in order that the young Misses Somers may have some knowledge of their Christmas companions beforehand, and not meet them as entire strangers, I have ventured to send you a picture of 'mother's sitting-room,' as it usually appears of an afternoon when your name is mentioned."

Uncle Thomas was delighted with the picture; so he sent it to the engraver, and requested him to prepare it for the Frontispiece of the Christmas Blossoms for this year; and so you may all have a chance of

looking at it, and knowing the little strangers who are introduced to you now, for the first time.

The "omnibus" made no progress, but Time did; for he needs no whip or spur; and Uncle Thomas began to gather his little presents and means of amusement for the holidays.

It is a great way from Philadelphia to Wyoming, and in winter, when the canals are frozen, part of the journey, by the shortest route, had to be made either in rough stages or in a private carriage, through wild mountains, over bad roads, among log cabins, in an uncultivated country. So, as Uncle Thomas was going to take with him two young and delicate little girls, he allowed himself plenty of time. He bought a whole parcel of little story books, and a few pretty pictures; took the girls from school, and started from Philadelphia three days before Christmas.

At first they travelled by railroad. Up the Schuylkill they swept, at the rate of twenty miles an hour. The country was covered with snow, and the trees hung with icicles, that glittered dazzlingly in the sunshine. Sometimes they were almost close to the

river, and the skaters were seen gliding along by their side, some of them almost keeping pace with the locomotive—for a very good skater can go on smooth ice nearly twenty miles an hour!

Then, again, they would dart over bridges built higher than the tree-tops, the wheels roaring like thunder, over streams and roads that passed far down below them, and the merry sleigh-bells tinkling in the bottom of the valley, as if the sound came up from under ground. The next hour, they saw boats floating in the canal on the hillside, high above the river, but bound up for the winter in the ice.

Then, every here and there, the water would rush down the side of the bank, in a foaming torrent, on to some great mill-wheel; and such a rattling of spindles was there, where they were spinning cotton in houses as big as a hospital or jail in the city, or half a dozen barns united in the country, that the air seemed full of the noise; and Mary and Emma wondered how the little girls, that they saw by hundreds through the windows, or going in and out of the factories, could hear each other talk.

Then they would see the steam, puffing out from

the pipe of some iron-mill, in huge wreaths of white vapour, rising almost as high as the clouds; while, from the tall brick chimney, volumes of smoke, as black as ink, poured down into the fields and swept away before the wind, like a thunder-cloud tumbled from the sky and rolled along the ground.

Now, they were surrounded by open fields, and neat little cottages and quiet school-houses, sometimes built among trees shady in summer; and country churches, some of which (I wish I could say all), had pretty spires, peeping up among the bare forest limbs: the next minute, they were hurrying through villages or inland towns swarming with people.

And all this while, they were going so fast that, when they looked out of the window and cast their eyes upon the road, close to the side of the cars in which they were riding, the snow seemed turned into water, rushing past them like a running stream. They could see nothing distinctly, and the inequalities of the earth appeared like swelling billows of foam; so that they felt giddy and sick if they tried to watch them long; and they were glad to turn their eyes to more distant objects.

Once, indeed, they were very much frightened, till Uncle Thomas explained to them what had occurred. It was broad daylight, and the sun was shining brightly, when, all of a sudden, everything became as dark as night. They could not see each other, nor Uncle Thomas; nor could Uncle Thomas see them. And every now and then, sparks of fire came sweeping by in the gloom, and the wheels of the cars and the noise of the locomotive sounded loud and hollow, while the very air felt close and hot. Oh! it was terrible to those who had never seen such things before. Mary clung to her protector's arm, and Emma gave a scream and burst out crying. Then it seemed as if a dozen people were laughing aloud all around them; but it did not sound like natural laughter—there was no ring to it. It was more like the noise that would be made if a person were to try to laugh when shut up in a barrel, the sound was so flat and smothered.

“Do not be frightened, my dear children; there is no danger,” said Uncle Thomas, in a kind voice, as he put an arm round each of them. “I ought to have been more guarded, and should have told you

beforehand what was coming; but I thought you were familiar with such things; for I forgot that it was night, and you were asleep on board the canal-boat, when it passed quietly through one of them, on your way from the West, last year."

Just as Uncle Thomas finished speaking, they dashed into daylight again, so suddenly that Emma stopped crying from very fright! There she sat, with her great eyes and little mouth both wide open, looking so utterly astonished that the people laughed again. Even Uncle Thomas could not help smiling, as he took her on his knee, and she buried her face under the breast of his coat.

"What was it, Uncle, what was it?" cried Mary.

"Nothing, my child, but a tunnel."

"And what is a tunnel?"

"Look back, quick, out of the window, and you will see one, or, at least, the mouth of one."

Mary did as she was bid; and there, sure enough, was a high, rocky hill, with a great black hole in the side of it: and she saw very plainly, that the road they were travelling came right out of the mouth of the hole.

“Why surely, Uncle, we have not been travelling under ground!” said she in deep surprise.

Uncle Thomas then explained to her how they contrived to blast passages through the solid rocks, so as to carry a road under a hill, and thus avoid the trouble of climbing over it. He told her he remembered a time long before there was a railroad in this country, or, indeed, for purposes of general travelling, in any other country.

“Nobody,” said he, “then thought of making tunnels (except in mines) through anything larger than a rock of a few feet in thickness, even if it would save the making of ten miles of road, at the expense of a great deal of money. But now, when the railroad engineers come to a narrow hill, over which it would take, perhaps, four horses and half as many hours to drag six passengers, they ‘tunnel’ right through it; and then the locomotive reaches the other side in less time than it took me just now to explain to you that there was nothing the matter; and yet it often carries with it thirty cars loaded with coal, or sixty or eighty empty ones, and thinks nothing of the weight of three or four hundred people.”

“And why,” asked Mary, “do they not tunnel every hill, and make all the roads level?”

“Because,” returned Uncle Thomas, “it would require a great deal more travelling than takes place on any common road, to pay the expenses of tunneling. It is cheaper to go over than through hills that rise so gently that the horses or the locomotive can go up and down over them without lightening the load.”

“Down them!” said little Emma, who had recovered from her fright and began to be interested; “why, Uncle, I should think they would go down of themselves, fast enough. Do you lighten a load to go down hill? I have seen people get out of a carriage when going up hill, but never when going down.”

“That matter depends very much upon the steepness of the hill,” replied Uncle Thomas. “When hills are very steep, you know that they put shoes, or brakes, or chains, on the wheels of a wagon to keep it from running down too fast. But if the load be very heavy, the shoe will slide, the brake may slip, the chain may be torn apart, or it may break out of the wheel the spoke to which it is fastened.

I remember once going down a mountain side in Pennsylvania, where there was great danger to the mail-stage, from the weight of the passengers, though the road had been improved at great expense, to render the slope more regular and gentle. A few years before, it had been so steep, that when loaded wagons descended, they were obliged not only to chain their wheels, but, usually, to cut down a tree and fasten it to the back of each wagon, so that, by dragging on the ground, it might help to keep the speed from becoming too great. It is said that the road was never much improved, till all the stout trees on the summit had been thus cut down and dragged into the valley. We shall see remarkably steep mountains, on our journey to-morrow, and then you will be able to form some idea of the troubles of travelling through hilly and uncultivated countries, not the least among which is the difficulty of getting safely down hill, easy as that process may seem to you, Emma."

Mary then inquired whether railroads never ran up and down hill, like common roads; and Uncle Thomas replied:

"They often have to wind about for many miles,

to avoid doing so; but it is seldom that they are so made as to rise or fall much more than forty-five feet in a mile, even in the steepest places; and when they are obliged to run up or down more abruptly, or, as the engineers express it, when they have *higher grades*, it generally requires a steam-engine at the summit, with a rope to draw up the cars and to let them safely down, on these portions of the road, which are called inclined planes. There is a railroad, not a great many miles from this, which is laid along the side of a long and high mountain, and is used to bring coal down from the Mauch Chunk coal mines to the Lehigh River. This is made so steep that when the empty cars have been drawn nine miles up, to what is called the summit level, by a long train of mules, the miners fill most of the cars with the heavy coal, and driving the mules into the remaining cars, which are fitted up as stables, with troughs for the animals to feed from, they let the whole train run down the mountain side, nearly to the lower end of the road, by its own weight alone, without either steam or horses or mules attached to it. All the way down, you may see the mules looking out of the

windows, to enjoy the prospect ; and they soon become so used to eating and enjoying themselves in this way, that after a few months of service, it is found impossible to make a Mauch Chunk mule pull down hill at all !”

“Ha ! ha !” cried both the children ; and Emma said, “Poor silly things ! if I were a mule, I would refuse to pull up hill ; or else, if I were a miner, I would make them pull down ; for why, when they are willing to work hard, should they refuse to work lightly ?”

“Every living thing in this world must work or be miserable, my child,” replied Uncle Thomas, gravely ; “every man and woman, boy and girl must work, to pay God for his goodness in giving us to enjoy the bright fields, and the beautiful woods, and the flowers, and the free air, and the rich crops ; for, in order that these things may be brought to be useful to us and to others, as He in his goodness designed they should be, we must arrange them and till them and keep them in order, not only for our own benefit, but that of others ; for, we are all members of one great family, the children of one parent, and should feel towards

each other like brothers and sisters. Then, again, we should all work, to pay Government for making and executing the laws that protect us in the enjoyment of these good things. We must work, to pay our parents for the trouble and care of our infant years, when we are too weak and too unwise to take care of ourselves; and we must work for the support of our children, and for the sick, and for the poor; for, they are all God's children, and he pays us for all this, with green fields, and bright flowers, and free air, summer and winter, harvest time and seedtime. Yes, we must all work; some with the head, and some with the pen, and some with the hand; but we all must work.

“Everything must work, my dear children. The grain works in the field, to furnish us with food, and asks us to feed it with manure; the wren and robin work, to keep the insects out of the garden, and come hopping round our windows to ask for their pay, in the crumbs from the table. The insects themselves work too. Who first spun the thread of your beautiful new scarf, Mary? Was it not the silk-worm? and did not the manufacturers rear him and nurse

him, and keep him from wet and cold all through the chilly spring weather, to reward him for his labour, when so many of his kind died or were eaten up by the birds on the mulberry trees out of doors? The rich dye of your frock, Emma, was made by the cochineal insect, and he was carefully attended and protected by little boys and girls all the while he was preparing it. They kept away the big ants and bugs that were continually coming to eat him, as he lay quietly on the limb of the tree where he was born.

“God pays everything that works, my children; for, labour is its own reward. There is nothing in the world so miserable as idleness; and I must tell you a little anecdote in proof of this.”

HOW TO MAKE CHILDREN LOVE STUDY.

“There was once a German nobleman who was a very kind-hearted man, and as he found that there were a great many children growing up in extreme ignorance, upon his estate and in the neighbouring town, he made up his mind to establish a free school, where they might all come and be taught to read,

and write, and cipher, so as to be able to do something better for themselves, when they should become men and women, than their parents had been able to do, before them. So the good Count built the school-house, and furnished it, and bought plenty of books, and employed plenty of teachers. But hardly any children came to the school; and those who did come, were the children of a better class of people, who had already learned something, and wished to know more.

“The Count was in great distress, for he really loved his people; so he went round among the parents, and endeavoured to induce them to send the young people to the school. The old ones thought and did not hesitate to say, that they and their fathers had got along very well without learning, and they could see no great reason for making their sons and daughters wiser than themselves. To please the Count, however, they agreed to let the children come if they chose; but not many did so choose; and, of these, the greater part soon made terrible complaints of the hard labour of study, and came no more.

“At length, the Count—who had introduced a new

and beautiful system of teaching, and had established a class of well-trained pupils, who daily went through their exercises in such a manner as to show how admirably it worked—suddenly thought of an expedient that proved how well he was acquainted with the nature of ignorant boys and girls, as well as ignorant parents. He undertook to *hire* the parents to send the young ones to his school.

“At first, he wished to *hire them to study*; but the old people were too kind-hearted to think of forcing their offspring to endure such terrible hard work. When, however, he offered, as a last resort, to pay the children a penny a day if they would regularly attend school, sit on a bench, and look at the class for a certain number of hours every day, without doing anything at all themselves, they saw no objection to ‘making a penny’ in that way, and no hardship in obliging the children to do nothing at all. So the young ones, though they would have been far better pleased to have remained at play out of doors, were compelled to sit on a bench, with their hands before them, every morning and evening, listening to

the exercises of the class, without being permitted to take any part in them.

“Now, the young rogues bore this pretty well the first day, though they began to be very tired and impatient, before they had earned their pennies. But before school was out, on the morning of the second day, three or four of the boys found themselves unable to sit still, doing nothing, any longer; and they begged the teacher to let them ‘go to work’ with the class. After some time, the teacher consented to let them do so, as a very great favour.

“The other children soon became interested in what their little companions and playmates were doing, and now that they had found how dreadfully tiresome it was *to do nothing*, and that it was a matter of favour to be allowed *to do anything*, they were seized with a general desire to go to work. In two or three days, the good Count gave his consent that they should be gratified. Ever since that time, the school has gone on prosperously, and the little boys and girls of that neighbourhood have been pulling up hill at their studies, as cheerfully as so many Mauch

Chunk mules. But if you were to see them sporting with their sleds on the hillside, at Christmas or New Year, you would be convinced that they like *to ride down hill* quite as well as our long-eared friends, and I doubt not that, if the Count were to attempt to make them work during the holidays, he would raise a rebellion among them quite as obstinate as that of the poor brutes, which little Emma seems to think so very unreasonable."

The children laughed heartily at this story, and it was some time before either of them spoke. At length Mary inquired whether it was not very unsafe to let the cars run so far down hill by their own weight, and whether they did not sometimes go too fast.

Uncle Thomas then explained how the conductors manage to check the cars whenever they wish to do so, by moving certain iron bars, which cause a block of wood to press against each wheel, thus preventing them from moving too rapidly; but he said that it was safe to go very fast indeed, on a perfectly well-made railroad, and that he had once travelled one

mile on that very route, at the rate of sixty miles an hour, which is as fast as the wind blows in a very strong breeze.

He told them, also, of two curious accidents that happened on the road. On one occasion, an empty car was started from the summit level, by the wind or some other unintended cause; and it came down the road at full speed, with nobody upon the carriage. Had it continued its course unchecked to the end, it must soon have acquired the speed of a hurricane, and might have done great mischief, perhaps destroying life. But Providence has so ordered the laws of nature, that the most awful accidents are often prevented by natural causes, when, to human judgment, they would appear inevitable; and so it happened in this case. A man chanced, just then, to be standing by the road, at a distance of some miles from the summit; and, hearing a noise like thunder approaching him, he stepped aside in alarm. Almost instantly, the car came rushing round a rock at a short distance; but, to his astonishment, its speed, which at first appeared terrible, became rapidly less and less, until, when it was directly opposite

to him, it stopped entirely. He saw, by the smoke about the wheels, that the car had almost taken fire; and, as he was accustomed to the mining business, he understood the case at once. He knew that, as soon as the wheels were cooled, the car would start again: so, in order to prevent any further mischief, he leaped upon it, and, seizing the iron bar that moved the '*brakes*,' he took it slowly and safely to the end of the road."

"But what made it stop of itself?" asked Mary, in much surprise.

"That I will explain," replied Uncle Thomas; "and the explanation will show you how very important it is for everybody to know something of the principles of chemistry and natural philosophy. There are many silly people in the world, who think that a knowledge of the sciences is of no use to a farmer, a mechanic, a working-man, or a woman; and yet these well-meaning folks are continually burning their fingers, or injuring their property, or wasting their labour, for want of a very little of that knowledge which they so despise.

"You have heard that the Indians and other

savages make fire, when they want it, by rubbing together two pieces of wood ; and little Emma remembers very well how quickly the rope blistered her hand, when she undertook, the other day, to slide down it too rapidly, at the Calisthenium. Men of science know that not only ropes, and wood, and human flesh grow hot when rubbed, but that friction or rubbing renders all things warmer.

“Then, again, you must have observed, if you ever saw the poker heated in the fire, that the hot end swells out, and you can perceive that it is visibly longer.”

“Oh yes !” cried Emma, interrupting him ; “only last week, I was stirring the coal in the grate at school, and, after about five minutes, the poker grew so large that I could not get it through the bars again, till the fire went almost out.”

“Very well,” said Uncle Thomas. “And philosophers teach us that not only pokers, but all other things, grow larger when heated. Now, when I tell you that the car that came near doing so much damage at Mauch Chunk had wheels with iron hubs running on iron axles, can you not tell me what

stopped its course and nearly set fire to the wood-work of the carriage?"

"Was it not the heating of the axles, by rubbing against the hubs, that made the car smoke and almost burned it?" inquired Mary.

"Exactly so! And the swelling or expansion of the ends of the axles, when they became very hot, made them bind so hard against the hubs of the wheels, through which they passed, that the wheels could not turn easily, and, at last, could not turn at all, till they had time to become cool again. So you perceive, that the same principle that enables you to warm your hands by rubbing them together in cold weather, may stop a railroad car or set fire to a mill. If we had time, and you were a little older, I could show you that the same principle by which a grocer weighs you a pound of sugar, keeps the sun and the moon and all the stars in their proper places; and, with a poker tied to a string, I could explain to you the whole theory of the movements of the planets and their distances from the sun. Then, let me beg you, my children, to remember,—when you think your lessons at school too burdensome, and you are

inclined to ask, what is the use of all this study for a little girl,—that every science, every kind of knowledge, is useful in the daily business of life,—that the farmer, the mechanic, the workman, and the lady at the head of her household, are as much interested in understanding the principles of nature and the truths of science, as the lawyer, the physician, or the statesman.”

“I wish we could go to school to you!” exclaimed Mary: “but, Uncle, are not these inclined planes on railroads very dangerous?”

“Do not be alarmed at my answer,” he replied, “for there are no inclined planes on this route. At the foot of the Mauch Chunk road there is a long and very steep one—as steep as the roof of a house. It is not intended for travelling, but merely to let down the cars loaded with coal, by means of machinery, from the end of the road, to the boats floating in the Lehigh River, which convey the anthracite to market, at Philadelphia. At the bottom of this plane, the cars run into a house built over the water on the river-side. The bottom of each car is fixed upon hinges, and is supported, on one side, by an iron

catch; and when the car comes directly over the boat, this catch is loosened, by touching a bar attached to the road itself; so that the bottom swings free, and lets all the coal fall at once, into the boat. The men below, who are engaged in loading the coal properly, know when a car is let down the plane, long enough beforehand, to stand out of the way and in safety. Beyond the place at which the load is thus '*shot*' into the boat, the rails of the road are curved upwards, towards the roof of the building, and by this means the speed of the car is checked, and it soon comes to rest.

"Now it happened, a few years ago, that a loaded car broke loose from its attachment to the machinery, and ran down the inclined plane, without anything to oppose its course. Before it reached the bottom, its speed became terribly rapid. It struck the bar that loosens the catches, before the workmen in the boat had sufficient warning, and two or more men were killed by the falling coal. The curvature of the rails, of which I have already told you, could not stop a body in such rapid motion, and the empty car not only shot entire off the end of the plane, but

actually sprang through the roof of the building, carrying away a considerable portion of it, and leaped nearly into the middle of the Lehigh !

“Such,” continued Uncle Thomas, “are some of the dangers of inclined planes on railroads, and, in order to avoid using them, these roads are often carried many miles out of the direct route. Both these plans, of getting up and down or going round hills and mountains, however, are very expensive, as well in time as money, and it is becoming more and more common to go through them instead of going over them. When hills are not very high, a passage is generally cut down from the surface, to the proper level. This is called a *deep-cut*, and you have seen several of these on this route to-day. But when the elevation of the ground is very great, it is often cheaper to make tunnels, or long caves, to accommodate the road ; like that which just now alarmed you so, by its sudden darkness. It seems as if no difficulties could conquer the energy of the American people in the present age. Not only have they carried a railroad into Canada, by bridging the awful gulf of Niagara, but they are at this moment making a tun-

nel through the Blue Ridge, one of the loftiest mountains in Virginia. This will require to be a mile or more in length, and must be completed by blasting away solid rock by gunpowder, through a great part of that distance, and at a depth of about a thousand feet below the summit of the mountain!"

"Why, how is it possible," exclaimed Mary, "for people to work so far under ground, and with gunpowder, too, without being smothered?"

"And why are they not killed when the powder goes off?" asked little Emma. "Do you not remember, sister, how frightened we were last summer, when we were riding over the wire bridge at Fairmount, and heard a great noise, like a cannon, and saw the big black stones flying up in the air, by the river-side, and coming down again into the water, like hail? They told us that was blasting rocks."

"No doubt there are great difficulties in this business," replied Uncle Thomas; "but 'patience and perseverance,' you know, '*remove mountains,*' and why should they not *bore through them?* It is easy, with proper caution, for the workmen to avoid the immediate danger of the blast, by stepping into little

niches in the rock, which are always left open on the sides of the tunnel. There is about as much danger of being drowned, as suffocated, in making tunnels; for the workmen sometimes come suddenly upon large springs, which pour a great body of water into the passage, and give rise to a vast amount of trouble and enormous expense. I am told, however, that, in the great Virginia tunnel, it will be necessary to carry shafts, or openings like chimneys, up to the surface of the mountain-side, to allow of free ventilation and circulation of air. This will no doubt render the passage much more pleasant, and perhaps more healthful; but, except where it is the nature of the rock or earth to throw out poisonous gases, and thus render the air injurious to life, we do not find the atmosphere of caves and great tunnels oppressive or unwholesome. I once walked three-quarters of a mile under ground, in a long and narrow cave, with a pretty little brook running through its whole length. It was nowhere much larger than an ordinary tunnel, and the round hole in a flat rock, through which we climbed down into it, as a chimney-sweep would descend a chimney, was only wide enough to let one

person pass at a time. Yet the atmosphere of this cave was pure, and the animals which inhabited it, whether in the air or the water, did not appear to suffer in their health."

"Animals in the air and water, and living underground, as if they were buried alive!" exclaimed Emma, in profound astonishment; "why, what kind of animals could live there?"

"They were not very numerous in their variety," he replied; "but there were among them, great numbers of mosquitoes and gnats, on the wing; multitudes of venerable old toads that had unfortunately hopped down the hole, and had to pass the remainder of their innocent and useful lives in crawling and leaping over the slippery rocks, without any hope of ever looking on the blessed sun again; also abundance of cat-fish and chubs, swimming about in a little lake formed by the subterranean brook, half a mile from daylight. People who visit the cave sometimes catch a mess of fish for their suppers in this pond."

"Now, Uncle," said Emma, "are you not telling a naughty story? How can a nasty, ugly, poisonous toad lead an innocent and useful life?"

Uncle Thomas looked very serious as he answered this question. "Now, my dear child," said he, "beware of unreasonable prejudices! That a toad is 'nasty,' I deny. Though it lives in a little hole in the earth, just deep enough to let it see out into the daylight, its skin is always remarkably clean; for the dirt will not adhere to it. Have you never seen it wiping itself off carefully, to get rid of the dust? Then, as to its being *poisonous*, this is only a vulgar notion of very ignorant people. There is nothing about any toad in the world, that would even hurt an infant; and, if it were not for our prejudice against these animals, no doubt we should find them as great a delicacy for the table as their first cousins, the bull-frogs, that bring such a high price in the market. Now, as for its ugliness; that is a matter of taste. We have no right to condemn any living thing because it is not made after the fashion that pleases us. Our Maker made them all; and everything that He makes is made exactly on the model best fitted to fulfil the purposes for which it was designed."

Emma looked puzzled for a moment, and then

modestly inquired what useful purpose such an awkward thing as a toad could answer?

“We have no right,” said Uncle Thomas, “to expect that God will inform us of all his plans; it is enough for us to know that they cannot be evil or imperfect, because *he is perfect* and all-wise. But there is one thing for which we should feel exceedingly obliged to this little animal, however unseemly its appearance. The wren and the swallow,—and many other small birds that cruel boys, and silly, heartless young men, who proudly style themselves sportsmen, persecute with so much thoughtlessness,—destroy in the daytime, vast multitudes of those insects which prey upon the crops of the farmer and thus rob many poor people of their livelihood, or render it so dear to them, that their wives and children suffer from the high price of provisions. The night-hawk and the bat come out when the sun goes down, and continue the same service, when the swallow and the wren have gone to roost. But there are many of the most destructive insects that begin their mischievous work after all these birds are at rest. Now, the toad begins to be most active after

sunset, and continues his hunting until late in the night. He leaps upon and devours the moths that attack the bee-hive, and spoil so much honey; the fly that lays its eggs between the stem and the root of the peach tree, and kills it in a few years; the worms that cut off the young corn, and many other depredators that lessen the profits of the farmer. It goes about among the peas, and the radishes, and the cabbages, picking off the bugs and the sloes, when nobody else can see them, because it is dark night; and if you were to view, without prejudice, the brightness of its piercing eye, I am sure you would acknowledge that it must have a soul within its bosom. It is by no means certain that this little animal is entirely devoid of mind and sentiment. The Burlington poet, who died only a few years ago, describes an unfortunate old toad that fell into a deep rut in the sand, and after making many vain attempts to get out, because the banks of the rut were so high, appeared to resign himself to his fate. He tells us very gravely that, as soon as the poor creature gave up in despair, it put up its hind foot and wiped away a tear from its very venerable face!—I know that you dislike snakes

more than you do toads, and with somewhat better reason ; for some snakes are very poisonous ; but I was once told, by an excellent farmer, that he had saved the year's keep of two cows, by forbidding his men to kill any of the black snakes in his meadow. They ate so many of the field-mice which destroy the roots of the grass, that the hay thus saved supported the cows. You should despise nothing—hate nothing, my dears, that God has made.”

“Oh ! but you are a dear, good, kind old Uncle Thomas, and seem to know everything,” said Mary. “Do tell me !—I once read that there were fish and crabs in the Great Cave of Kentucky that were blind, and had no eyes, because eyes were of no use in the dark :—were the fish caught in the cave you speak of blind ?”

“No, my child, they were not blind,” replied Uncle Thomas ; “because the brook in which they lived came in at the upper end of the cave, by sinking into the ground at that place, and reappearing as a subterranean spring within the cavity : then, again, just beyond the little lake, the ground declined considerably, so that the brook broke forth from under

the rocks in the form of a large ordinary spring on the hillside :—so the fish could come out to daylight whenever they pleased; and they thus preserved their eyesight. Neither did the musquitoes give us any reason to believe that they were blind; for they bit us most unmercifully; but then, you know, they could fly in and out of the hole that formed the mouth of the cave. The poor toads were not so fortunately situated, for, when they once fell in, they were confined, for the remainder of their lives, in their dark dungeon. We lighted up the cave with tallow candles stuck in chinks of the rock, as we went towards our fishing ground at the lake, and when we returned, we found two or three rows of ancient-looking toads ranged in circles round every candle, with their noses thrust over each other's backs, as close to the blaze as possible. Their eyes were glassy and dull, as if covered with a thick film; but, though they could not see objects distinctly, and showed no signs of fear when a finger was thrust close before them, it was evident that they could distinguish light from darkness, and looked at the candle with much the same melancholy interest with which old fellows, like my-

self, look back upon the fading memories of early days, and the sunshine of our youth.

“ The fish and crabs of the Great Cave of Kentucky live in large and deep pools, between high rocks, and have been washed into their prisons by high freshets in a neighbouring river communicating with the cave, which occasionally overflows those rocks; and when once caught in these traps, very few of them ever escape. There they remain, and live and die, generation after generation, till the sense of sight (which probably could not be entirely lost during the lifetime of one individual), and the natural colour (which, both in animals and vegetables, depends upon the light of the sun), are entirely lost. All that remains of the structure of the eye is a little dot, that points out where such an organ once existed in the race; and all that remains of their original colour is a tint of yellow. But the toads in the cave of which I have spoken are not so completely entrapped. Though the parents cannot get out, they lay their eggs, like all reptiles of their kind, in the water; where they are hatched into tadpoles, which can swim like fish, and can easily make their way through the

lower spring into the outer world, where they can use eyes to advantage; and where nature, of course, furnishes them with such organs. If the tadpoles could not escape, we should no doubt find there a race of yellow toads, as blind as the fish in the cave of Kentucky.

“And now, my children, I hope you will not be too proud to learn a most valuable moral lesson from the history of the toad. When any bodily or mental faculty is left unemployed, the very organs on which the faculty depends soon loses its power; and if a nation or a race continues the neglect of any virtue for a long series of ages, it also loses the capacity for practising that virtue, perhaps until many generations have lived and died, and the power is gradually recovered. This is the reason why a people who have laboured long under gross oppression ceases to know how to be free—as was seen in the great French Revolution; and why, in countries where trade and the making of money are considered the chief duty of man, real honesty becomes almost unknown; as is the case in Hindostan, and, I fear, in some other places.”

In such conversation as this, and in answering the questions of the little girls on many other subjects, time flew as rapidly as the railroad cars; and when they, at last, found leisure to look out of the window once more, they were astonished to find themselves in what seemed to be a new world. Instead of gentle hills and meadows, marked out into fields by fences peeping above the snow, with villages, or large houses, or manufactories crowning the heights and dotting the low grounds, they found themselves rushing along a narrow valley, close by the river-side, with high mountains and precipices on every hand, occasionally appearing even to overhang the cars. They had sometimes almost to sprain their little necks to look up at the sky; and there was hardly anything to be seen on the summits, except here and there a tall, blasted pine tree, that seemed to have died of old age, or to have been withered and scorched with fire. In summer-time, they would have been delighted with the grandeur and beauty of the scene; but now, everything looked so barren, cheerless, and dreary that they felt very happy when the cars stopped, and

they found themselves in Pottsville—the end of that day's journey.

Next morning, Uncle Thomas took them to see several of the mines, and they went into one of them some distance, in order to feel how warm they are in winter, though they are so cool in summer, which is owing to what is called the mean temperature of the earth. Uncle Thomas explained it, by informing them that earth is a slow conductor of heat—which means that it is slow either in receiving heat or parting with it—so that the warmth of summer does not penetrate far below the surface, and even the cold winter lasts too short a time to allow it to part with its natural warmth through any great depth. It therefore preserves at all times a moderate degree of warmth, in caves and great tunnels, which feel cool in contrast with summer's heat, and warm in contrast with winter's cold.

But, if I were to tell all that the little girls asked, and all that Uncle Thomas told them in reply, it would require half-a-dozen Christmas Blossoms to contain the story. They soon hurried forward on their journey, and so must we.

In the afternoon, Uncle Thomas hired an extra stage and driver, so that they could have it all to themselves, and take their own time; and off they went across the mountains towards Danville.

The children had many opportunities that day of proving the vast advantages of railroads over the ordinary highway. Though no people on earth are so careless of human life and human limbs in travelling as the Americans; and though two locomotives once in a while run together, like a couple of mad buffalo bulls in the plains of Arkansas, crushing and tossing everything around them; while an occasional car, with all its load of passengers, runs unchecked down an inclined plain, leaps through an open draw-bridge into a river, or springs from the badly laid rails down a steep embankment, jumbling men, women, and children into one extremity of the carriage, like the first half-bushel of potatoes poured into a bag by a truck farmer on the evening before market-day; it is found that, where one of ten thousand railroad passengers is injured by these accidents of the way, there are at least ten who meet with similar disasters on common roads.

If Mary and Emma had trembled while listening, on the preceding day, to tales of danger upon railroads, they were now still more alarmed when, after toiling slowly up some precipitous mountain, and trotting gently across the narrow table-land on its summit, they found themselves careering down the opposite side, between a pine-topped wall of rocks on the left, and an abrupt and almost sheer descent upon the right; where the leaders' feet, as they rushed round the repeated doublings of the steep road, came within three inches of the edge of the precipice, and the stage, as it was jerked round each rapid curve, slid sideways till the wheels obliterated their own track and piled up a little wall of snow upon the verge, as if to protect the carriage and its inmates from destruction. The children were so much and so frequently frightened by these and other peculiarities of mountain travel, that it destroyed, in great degree, the pleasure of the day's journey. Right glad were they to hear that, in a short time, good railroads will replace all the most important of these wild highways; and still more were they delighted when they found themselves descending into the rich

valley of the Susquehanna, which they crossed about sunset, reaching the nice little town of Danville, almost too tired to take tea, and quite ready for an early bed.

Bright and early, the next morning, they started for Kingston and Wilkesbarre, two lovely towns on opposite sides of the river, separated only by a bridge, and standing near where once stood the old fort, of which Campbell, the poet, sings so beautifully in his "Gertrude of Wyoming."

Here Uncle Thomas spent an hour in visiting some old friends, and then the party took coach for the residence of Mr. Williams, whose fine old homestead stands in the midst of his noble farm, near the banks of the Lackawana.

The sun was declining as the carriage drove up to the white gate in front of the lawn, on which many evergreens and the bare branches of numerous shrubs gave evidence of the richness of its summer dress; but the rich, golden light of evening tinged the snow with a ruddy hue, and glancing up from its surface, fell upon a living group upon the porch in front of the house, as if it would make signs to Uncle Thomas

and his little friends, that there was a warm, summer welcome awaiting them within. There was Harry Williams, with his broad, white brow and sunburnt cheek, and dear Mrs. Williams in her best silk dress, and Charlie Williams waving the stars and stripes above his head, and Willie Williams cracking his whip, and Annie Williams dancing and clapping her hands for joy.

“Oh! what a pretty little boy!” exclaimed Emma, looking at Willie.

“And won’t we love them all dearly!” said Mary.

So the coach drove up to the door, the steps were let down, and Mr. Williams himself helped the children to alight, one at a time.

As Mary was getting out, Charlie rushed down from the porch to welcome her, and just as she dropped him the most polished of all courtesies, which had been taught her at school, he dashed his flag-staff into the snow, and, like a true soldier, threw his arms around her and gave her a kiss.

Mary blushed, but the other children were actually frightened at his boldness. Emma waited for Uncle Thomas’s hand, before she ventured to advance, and

when they reached the last step of the porch together, there they found Annie and poor little Willie, who had actually dropped his whip from embarrassment, each trying to get behind the other, pushing each other forward, and saying, "You go first now!"—"No, you!"

"Come, come!" cried Uncle Thomas, "you must not play stranger with each other, my dear children." So he caught up Willie, and put him, struggling and kicking, into Mary's arms, saying, "You are the oldest, Mary, and must nurse the baby!" Then he stepped up, with mock gravity before Annie, made her a most stately bow, and taking her hand, led her to little Emma.

"My dear Miss Williams," said he, "allow me the gratification of introducing to your acquaintance, and recommending to your favour, my young friend, Miss Emma Somers."

The children could not help laughing at this, for it was very seldom that Uncle Thomas took the trouble to play the part of the formal gentleman; and, the ice thus broken, all the children ran to the "nursery"

together, to help the strangers "to take off their things."

Almost as soon as the "old folks" had seated themselves in the parlour, there came upon the wind the sound of many childish voices, and Uncle Thomas stepped to the window to see what new-comers ventured to make such a prodigious uproar. You should have seen his benevolent smile, when he found it was only the little Somerses and the little Williamses all snow-balling each other, and the boys rolling heels over head in the snow! And that was the end of the journey.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

After supper, Mr. and Mrs. Williams and all the little ones were collected together in "the sitting-room" that had so long served as a stable for the "omnibus," and a long debate was held, as to the best mode of passing the holidays, until Thursday, when the Somerses would have to take leave, in order to be ready for school, the day after New Year, with-

out travelling on Sunday, which Uncle Thomas never permitted.

Arrangements were made in due form, for hanging up the stockings, and then, plans for parties and visits among the neighbours, were so contrived as to fill up the days with pleasures. But what most interests us here, was a proposal made by Uncle Thomas, that they should form themselves into a reading society, to meet every evening in the sitting-room. He told them that he had brought some pictures for them to look at, but that he did not wish to talk about them all at once, for that pleasure and instruction are both like the appetite;—too full a meal destroys digestion. He said, too, that besides the little books he intended for presents, he had brought with him some that were larger and intended partly for older people, but that they contained a few stories for the very young, and his plan was, to choose from among these, one or more to be read to the little folks every evening, giving them leave to interrupt for the purpose of asking questions whenever they heard anything that they did not understand. “These stories,” he added,

“I intend to have printed, next year, in the Christmas Blossoms, and I will send you each a copy.”

Uncle Thomas’s plan was approved by the clapping of hands; and then Mrs. Williams remarked that the little strangers must be fatigued with their journey, and perhaps the young ones had better retire.

“I don’t want to go to bed till I have seen some of the pictures and heard Uncle Thomas read a story,” said Willie, pouting and rubbing his eyes with the back of his hand.

“The girls are no doubt somewhat tired,” said Uncle Thomas; “but perhaps we might find time to look at one picture before going to bed. Charlie, my lad, there is my pocket portfolio. Just let it fall open of itself, and bring me the picture that you find at that place.”

Charlie did as he was bid, and immediately exclaimed, “Oh! here *is* a beautiful picture. Two boys playing with a schooner, completely rigged, and all her sails set; and there is another boy walking with his mother over the bridge. He is looking round, and wants to stay and play with the boat, but she will not let him—what a shame! But just look there! Ha,





MURPHY.

SARTAIN.

The Young Kingfishers.





ha! There is no wind to make the boat go; and there is a little fellow who has been up to the cottage for the bellows, and down he comes to blow the sails, as if he were going to blow the fire. Oh! how I love sailing and fishing. How I should like to go to sea, and travel and see all parts of the world."

"It seems very pleasant, no doubt," observed Uncle Thomas, "and it is certainly very improving to travel; but when we cannot do so by going to sea, we can, at least, travel in imagination, and to great advantage, by using proper books while sitting by our own fire-sides. I hope we shall do so to some purpose in our Christmas reading society. But, Charlie, I have wandered a great deal myself, by sea and land, and can assure you that, like all other enjoyments, travelling is surrounded by troubles and dangers. On the great sea, the wind often blows the wrong way for your purpose. Sometimes it will not blow at all; and there, you can get no bellows from the cottage, Charlie, to make the schooner go. There is, at last, no place like home.

"However," he added, taking a very prettily bound book from his pocket, "if you should one day visit

foreign lands, my good boy, my wishes for the safety of the ship that carries you will be as warm as those of the poet who wrote these pretty little verses."

And he opened the book and read them.

THE BEAUTIFUL BAY.

Little bark of the ocean,
How gentle thy motion!
Wafted by light winds, so sportive and gay.
Thy white sails are gleaming
Where sunlight is streaming,
Over the waves of that beautiful bay.

Gentle bark, as thou goest
How little thou knowest
What fate awaits thee when far, far away;
What billows may break thee,
What stormy winds wreck thee,
Sheltered no more by that beautiful bay.

Little bark of the ocean,
Then swift be thy motion,
Dancing along through the silvery spray;
Light hearts will greet thee,
When old friends shall meet thee,
Safely returned to that beautiful bay.

“And now, will you read us a pretty story?” asked Annie Williams.

“I think we had better adjourn it till our next meeting,” replied Uncle Thomas; “for see, poor Willie is already sound asleep.”

So the company broke up for the night, and went to dream of Kriss Kringle and full stockings.

THE SECOND NIGHT.

THE children had enjoyed themselves to their hearts' content, with the presents that their parents and their visiter had secretly bestowed during the night—the two little ones, with their cakes and confectionary, and three older ones, with their story-books, and other trifles ;—so that when evening came, they were fresh and ready for the organization of their reading society.

“What officers shall we require?” asked Mr. Williams, of Uncle Thomas, with a smile, when they were all collected in the sitting-room.

“Why, as there is no money to be collected, I presume we shall not need a Treasurer; and as I propose to draw up a history of our sayings and doings, for publication, I suppose I may be regarded as Secretary. So, I move that little Willie take the

box of his 'Omnibus,' as President, and we proceed to business."

Instantly the old trunk was drawn out before the fire, and Willie, with a newspaper cocked hat on his head, and his whip for a gavel, was seated upon it in due form. Everybody applauded, except Charlie, but he looked a little displeased.

"What is the matter, Charles?" inquired the mother.

"Why, I think that if Willie is made an officer, I ought to be an officer too; for I'm older than he."

"A true American lad!" exclaimed Uncle Thomas! "Well, well; I move that Charlie act as doorkeeper."

No one objected, though Mrs. Williams looked a little grave; and Charlie, taking his flag in hand, marched off with becoming dignity to his station.

"And now, Mr. President," said Uncle Thomas, rising; "I propose, with your permission, to read a conversation in relation to the sport of fishing, between an English lady and her son, who appears to be a namesake of our honourable doorkeeper. You will recollect that, at our last meeting, when we were

examining the picture of the Little Navigators, Charlie expressed an extreme liking for that sport, and perhaps it may be right to let him see that all the world does not agree with him on this subject; for it is well for all of us to test our opinions by those of other people occasionally, for fear we should do wrong through errors of judgment."

"Oh, do read it! do read it!" cried all the children at once: so Uncle Thomas sat down and began.

THE SPORT OF FISHING.

There is always a degree of pleasure in attending to the questions of children, when they themselves attend to the answers their inquiries draw forth. Thus it was the custom of Mrs. Dalton to encourage her son to ask questions about everything which interested or amused him, so that in time he obtained the name of the "inquisitive boy;" for, though such was the love of his mother, and so great her desire for his improvement, that she never thought of the trouble of answering whatever he asked, there were

others who visited at her house, of a somewhat different opinion, and who occasionally put him off with answers which conveyed no information at all,—sometimes because they did not want to be troubled, and sometimes, as he shrewdly supposed, because they did not exactly know what to say.

“I wonder,” said Charles to his mother one day, “why you do not like the sport of fishing?”

“Simply because I never could see the *sport* of killing any animal whatever,” replied his mother.

“No sport in a good rabbit hunt,” exclaimed Charles, “nor in going out with a gun! What is it you would call sport, then?”

“I should call that sport,” replied Mrs. Dalton, “in which both the parties concerned found entertainment. Certainly not that, in which, like hunting, shooting, and fishing, the amusement is all on one side; while terror, misery, and death are on the other. This may seem to you a strange, and, as most boys would call it, an old-womanly notion; but the longer I live, the more I am convinced of the importance of keeping distinctly in our minds, the two ideas of killing and sport.”

“But, mother,” said Charles, with some impatience, “surely you don’t mean to say that the killing of animals for our use is wrong?”

“Certainly not,” replied his mother, “yet there is a wide difference between killing them only when it is necessary, and that as quickly as we can, and killing them in a cruel manner for amusement only.”

“Then you would never have us eat fish, I suppose,” said Charles, “for we can certainly do without it?”

“I do not see,” replied his mother, “why we should not kill and eat the inhabitants of the water, as well as those of the air; and I should be sorry indeed to deprive the many poor fishermen who subsist by this means alone, of the honest and laborious calling by which they earn their bread.”

“Fishermen!” said Charles contemptuously, “I never thought of those old fellows, with their slouched hats and weather-beaten faces. It is the patient angler, like good Isaac Walton, that takes my fancy. And as to fishing being a cruel sport, you must, I think, allow that Isaac Walton was one of the kindest and best of men?”

“I have no wish,” replied Mrs. Dalton, “to deny that your favourite was a good man, or that he was a kind one either. He himself tells us that he took no delight in killing anything but fishes.”

There was an arch smile upon Mrs. Dalton's countenance as she said this, which made her son suspect that she was not yet quite so fully convinced, as he wished her to be, of the desirableness of killing fishes merely for amusement; and he therefore went on with his argument, reminding her of a memorable observation of Dame Juliana Berners, a prioress of a nunnery and an accomplished and learned lady, who wrote a book on the art of fishing, made up from the only three works on that subject known to exist in her day, two of which were printed almost four hundred years ago. The learned prioress says, in her very old English style: “Also ye shall not use this forsayd crafty dysporte for no covetesnes, to the encreasyng and sparynge of your money only; but principally for your solace, and to cause the helthe of your body and especially of your soule: for when ye purpose to go on your disportes, in fyshinge, ye will not desyre greatly many persones wyth you, whyche myghte

lette you of your game. And thenne ye may serve God devowtly in saying your customable prayers; and thus doinge you shall eschewe and avoyde many vices."

"There! mother," said Charles Dalton, when he had turned to this passage, and read it with an air of triumph, "you see what an excellent thing fishing is, when it leads to such consequences. Hear also what good Isaac himself says," he continued, without allowing his mother time to speak. "'Doubt not angling is an art worth your learning; the question is, whether you be capable of learning it? for angling is something like poetry, men are born so: I mean with inclinations to it, though both may be heightened by discourse and practice; but he that hopes to be a good angler, must not only bring an inquiring, observing, searching wit, but he must bring a large measure of hope and patience.' Thus you see, mother," continued the exulting boy, "angling not only causes good and pious feeling in those who practise it, but requires many good qualities both of head and heart, to render the angler a proficient in his art."

"If," said Mrs. Dalton, "to be a perfect angler, is,

in other words, to be a wise, good, and happy man, as your old friend Isaac seems to think, then I grant the truth of this last statement; but since an inquiring, observing, and searching wit, with a large measure of hope and patience, may be enjoyed as well by those who do not fish, as by those who do; and as these qualities may be employed to much better purpose, I am still of the same opinion with respect to the sport of fishing, that, considered simply as a sport, it is cruel and barbarous, and not worthy to be practised as an amusement by enlightened beings."

"Oh, mother! mother!" exclaimed Charles, "you should not say so much as that. Look at hunting, for instance. How much worse it is!"

"The fact of hunting being worse, does not make fishing good," replied the mother. "Yet so far as the latter is a peaceful, solitary, and meditative recreation, I grant it much less injurious in a moral point of view, than those amusements which bring people together under feelings of strong excitement, and thus lead them too frequently into folly and vice. It is on the ground of cruelty alone, that I am opposed to the sport of fishing; and I cannot help thinking that you

would be so too, if you considered how much torture is often inflicted upon the bait, as well as upon the game."

"I never thought of that," observed Charles, rather seriously.

"No, you never thought," replied his mother, "when the worm was twisting on your hook, that you were making the sufferings of one creature serve for the deception of another, to betray it to its death. But as you have quoted Isaac Walton to me, doubtless you will be glad to hear what he has to say on the subject of live bait.

"First, he advises that the fish, or the frog, which is used as bait, should be treated in such a manner as to preserve its life to the longest period; that is, to prolong its sufferings to the utmost that nature is capable of enduring. 'A perch,' says he, 'is the longest lived on a hook, and having cut off the fin on his back, which may be done without hurting him,' (*the writer does not tell us how,*) 'you must take your knife, which cannot be too sharp, and betwixt the head and the fin on the back, cut or make an incision, or such a scar, as you may put the wire of your hook

into it, with as little bruising or hurting of the fish as art or diligence will enable you to do; and so carry your wire along his back, near the tail of your fish, betwixt the skin and the body of it; draw out the wire of your hook at another scar near his tail; then tie him about it with thread, but no harder than of necessity, to prevent hurting the fish; and the better to avoid hurting, have a kind of probe to open the way for the more easy entrance and passage of your wire.'

"Now if, in the hands of a man so careful, and unquestionably so kind as Isaac Walton, the fish used for bait was treated with this consideration, what must be the fate of similar victims in the hands of those thousands of thoughtless or cruel sportsmen who have never learned to regard it as a matter of the slightest importance, whether animals are tortured or not? But let us hear what he has to say about baiting with live frogs."

"I don't think you need read that," interrupted Charles. "There are many things in the book better worth reading than that."

"Still I should like you to hear it," said his mo-

ther, and she read accordingly. ‘You must thus use your frog, that he may continue long alive. Put your hook into his mouth and out at his gills, and then with a fine needle and silk sew the upper part of his leg with only one stitch to the wire of your hook, and in so doing *use him as though you loved him*; (*rather difficult, to be sure*) that is, harm him as little as you may possibly, that he may live the longer.’

“The writer then goes on to state how such live bait may make sport by being tied to the body of a duck, or a goose, and the bird chased over a river or pond. This refinement upon the art of fishing reminds me of the story of a gander, told by a farmer in Scotland, whose property he was, and who had often been at great pains to restrain the wandering habits of his vagrant bird. Wishing to check this propensity, the farmer one day seized the gander just as he was about to take to the water, and tying a large fishhook, to which was fastened a piece of dead frog, to his leg, sent him in this way to pursue his voyage.

“The bait soon caught the eye of a greedy fish,

which, swallowing the hook, suddenly stopped the progress of the astonished gander, who fluttered and struggled on the surface of the water, until ducked underneath by the pulling of the fish at the hook. In this manner the contest was maintained for some time; at one moment the fish, and at another the goose, appearing to gain the mastery. At last, however, the gander proved victorious, and bearing away to the nearest shore, landed amongst his cackling companions one of the finest fish ever caught in fresh water. This expedient is said to have answered the purpose of the farmer, by deterring the gander from ever again venturing beyond his own pond.

“But to return to your friend Isaac Walton. I must in candour confess, that in his curious book, ‘The Complete Angler,’ there is so much of gentleness, kindness, and good feeling, that I only regret his consideration should have been bestowed upon the mode of torturing animals with the least possible cruelty, rather than upon the pleasure of studying their habits without torturing them at all. There is also a healthy kind of freshness in all his descriptions of rural life and scenery, which renders his book

altogether like a poem, rather than a treatise upon art, and particularly the art of killing. Who, for instance, would believe that the following passage could have been written by one whose chief delight was in making sport of death?

“Look, under that broad beech-tree, I sat down when I was last this way a-fishing, and the birds in the adjoining grove seemed to have a friendly contention with an echo, whose dead voice seemed to live in a hollow tree, near to the brow of that primrose hill; there I sat viewing the silver streams glide silently towards their centre, the tempestuous sea; yet sometimes opposed by rugged roots and pebble stones, which broke their waves, and turned them into foam: and sometimes I beguiled time by viewing the harmless lambs, some leaping securely in the cool shade, whilst others sported themselves in the cheerful sun, and others I saw craving comfort of their bleating dams.’

“We have here,” observed Mrs. Dalton, “one of the sweetest pictures of rural scenery, which I remember ever having met with.”

“I cannot help fancying, after all,” said Charles,

“that it must be something of this kind which gives to that strange book of Isaac Walton’s its indescribable charm. One seems to be living, when one reads it, in the very air and sunshine of which he writes, and to see the identical green meadows through which his favourite rivers flow.”

“You are perfectly right, my love,” said his mother, “and I wish every one was wise enough to come to the same conclusion. Let the sport of angling boast of all the pleasure which exclusively belongs to it; but let the green fields, the quiet streams, the fresh air, and the blue skies, also have their due, and do not suppose because you are happy under such circumstances as Isaac Walton describes, that it must necessarily be because you are catching fish.

“But beyond the consideration of cruelty already taken into account, there is another view of the subject which has always operated with me against the practice of angling as a sport; and perhaps I shall most easily explain my meaning to you, by asking you a few simple questions, instead of your asking them of me. In the first place, then, what are the

qualities of head or heart most called into exercise by the complete angler?"

"I have told you what my friend Isaac says," replied Charles, evidently not unwilling to evade the question.

"Yes," said his mother, "but that is not what I ask you. I want your own opinion, not Isaac Walton's."

"It is a very difficult question," observed Charles. "I really don't know, but I think patience is most wanted, and that you know is good."

"Patience," replied the mother, "is good in a good cause; yet I think you would hardly call patience a merit in a tyrant who should wait for the surest opportunity of entangling, and then destroying his victim."

"Then there is perseverance," said Charles, "and that I am sure is good, at least you often tell me so."

"Of perseverance we may say the same as of patience," observed his mother. "Both are excellent when their object is good; but I very much question whether a sly kind of overreaching spirit is not more

brought into action by fishing, than either of these qualities—a disposition to overcome in the end by subtlety and guile. Hence, the stealthy step and the silent movements of the angler, with the patient waiting which have been so extolled, but which, to me, have a treacherous sort of character, such as I never have been able to admire. You have spoken with contempt of the class of persons commonly called fishermen, that is, the men who derive their maintenance from catching fish; but to me there is something more manly and dignified in braving the storms of the ocean, or the vicissitudes of the seasons, in the pursuit of an honest and needful calling, than in strolling about the fields and streams, making pastime of the art by which a few harmless creatures may be beguiled to their own destruction.”

“But the men of whom you speak,” observed Charles, “are amongst the most ignorant people in the world, while their homes are frequently the most wretched of human dwellings.”

“I should think,” replied his mother, “that fishermen are, as a class, the poorest of any who pursue an honest and necessary occupation. Perhaps none but

the poor would subject themselves to the hardships they are compelled to endure."

"Not only are they poor and ignorant," continued Charles, "but, if all we hear of them be true, they have always been ready to join themselves with smugglers and pirates. They are even said to steal the watches and money from shipwrecked men, and have been known to strip the rings from the fingers of those who have been drowned."

Here Willie interrupted the reading with an exclamation:

"Why! Uncle Thomas. Surely fishermen do not live by stealing. I often see them drawing the seine in the Susquehanna, and they seem to me to be very quiet, civil people; except that they wear such terrible large boots."

"You should remember, my dear," said Uncle Thomas, "that Mrs. Dalton is an Englishwoman, and she is telling her son about English fishermen. Then, you are thinking of fresh-water fishing, in a river; and she is talking of salt-water fishing, at sea. In England, there are no such great fresh-water rivers

from which to draw thousands of shad at a haul, as they sometimes do here. At our inland fisheries, there are no wrecks to tempt the men, and as for piracy, they are never far enough from shore to attempt it.

“But there is another and nobler reason why, in this country, fishermen are a very different class of people from those of which Charles is speaking. We have the grandest of all sea fisheries—the whale fishery—and have more people engaged in it than all the world besides; and yet piracy is totally unknown among them. The reason is, that every man in America who has good health and strength, and an honest calling, cannot only make himself comfortable, but can support a family, with prudence and economy. Therefore, almost the only people among us who deserve to be pitied—not despised—for extreme poverty are, the sick, those who are weak in their intellect, and those families that, having had the misfortune to be brought up in wealth and fashion, and never having learned to do anything useful to others, find themselves reduced by the course of trade or the death of friends, and know not how to make a living

by any kind of settled employment. Here, no class has the right to despise another; and hence every man feels a degree of self-respect, that, even when he is disposed to be wicked, generally prevents him from doing anything that would give others that right. In England, however, the *noble*, so called, and the rich are taught by their laws and customs to despise the poor and the humble; and for this reason the poor are made very poor, and the humble sunk very low; and there is little encouragement for virtue or honourable conduct among the masses. The time may come, though let us hope not, when the same evils may exist here. Till then, whenever you read an English book, you should make allowances for the meanness that despises the poor; the degradation of the people, almost forced upon them by the oppression of those who are called their betters; and the heartless pride or haughty charity with which the humble are usually treated in a land where almost all the interests of a family are generally sacrificed to the oldest born; who is thus tempted to become a tyrant, even over his own brothers and sisters, a fawner upon his superiors, and a despiser of all whom

he has been taught to consider as beneath him in rank. But let us hear how the mother answered the son:”—

“That very poverty of the fishermen for which you despise them,” replied Mrs. Dalton, “has ever been the means of rendering them peculiarly liable to fall under the temptation afforded by smuggling and piracy; while their ignorance has prevented their being sensible of the evils resulting from association with the daring and desperate characters by whom such trading is usually carried on.”

“What kind of fish,” asked Charles, “amongst those usually caught as an article of sale, is considered the most valuable?”

“Herrings,” replied Mrs. Dalton, “are by far the most numerous, and the most extensively sold.”

“Yet,” said Charles, “the herring fishery is only carried on at certain times of the year. If they are so plentiful, why do not people catch herrings always?”

“Because,” replied his mother, “these fish migrate

like many kinds of birds, and are only found along our shores while on their passage southward."

"Where do they come from?" asked Charles: "where can they possibly spend their winter?" with several other questions, which he did not leave his mother time to answer.

"As the shoals of herring invariably proceed from the northward," replied Mrs. Dalton, "making their first appearance in the neighbourhood of the Shetland Islands in April, it has been supposed by naturalists that their winter habitation is within the Arctic circle, under those vast fields of ice, where they feed upon the myriads of shrimps and other marine insects which abound there, and which also supply food for the gigantic whale. Here, it is most probable, they deposit their spawn; and hence, they issue forth, silently progressing to the south in those immense shoals, the dimensions of which are measured by leagues, and miles, moving steadily along in close array, and in columns of such depth, from the surface downwards, as to have obtained the name, amongst the northern nations, of 'herring mountains.' Early in the spring, these columns advance

yearly from the north, in apparently undiminished numbers, though preyed upon by a multitude of enemies, as well from the shore, as the air, and in their native element; for, even when unmolested by man, wherever they proceed, they have to meet the attacks of the grampus, the porpoise, shark, codfish, and even haddock; while, if they approach the surface, they become the prey of innumerable sea-gulls, and other aquatic fowls, which hover along their moving ranks."

"And pray who eat these herrings?" asked Charles, "for we do not often see them brought to table."

"They are chiefly salted, and cured for exportation," replied his mother, "and are in much greater demand in the Roman Catholic countries than with us, owing to the frequency and length of their fasts, during which so savoury an article of food forms a very agreeable variety to the poorer classes, who cannot afford the indulgences which grace the tables of the rich."

"What fish do you think next in value?" asked Charles. "I should suppose, the cod; and that, you say, is caught in the northern seas."

"I should rather think," replied his mother, "that

the salmon is esteemed more highly than the cod, and consequently a more profitable article of traffic."

"And where is that caught?" asked Charles.

"The salmon is chiefly caught," replied his mother, "in rivers, or estuaries, and hence has come to be considered, in many cases, as private property."

"I think I have read of places called salmon leaps: what are salmon leaps?" asked Charles.

"There is a remarkable peculiarity in this fish, which has often astonished those who were not acquainted with its habits," replied his mother. "The salmon, which is accounted the king of fresh-water fish, is accustomed to seek our rivers only at certain seasons of the year, there to deposit its spawn; and such is the determination with which it pursues its way inland, sometimes for hundreds of miles against the course of the water, that even a fall of considerable height is no obstacle to its progress. Such, indeed, is the strength and perseverance of this fish, that by repeated leaps, and by seeking those parts of the fall where the water is least powerful, it works its way in time up to higher waters, and so on until it finds a suitable place for the safety of its young;

the same fish, it is said, choosing always the same rivers, to which they are accustomed. It has also been ascertained, that in going upwards, the salmon will keep to the bottom of the water, where the current is weakest; while on returning, as it does in the autumn towards the sea, it will avail itself of the strength of the current by swimming near the surface."

Here it was Mary's turn to interrupt. She inquired whether we have salmon in America, and whether our shad and herring come here also to lay their eggs, and whether they can all leap up waterfalls.

Uncle Thomas informed her that all the migratory sea-fish that visit our rivers in the spring of the year, come for the same purpose as the salmon; that is, to deposit their eggs. In this respect they resemble the wild geese, ducks, and pigeons; the old ones always returning, if possible, to the place where they were born, every year, though in the intervals of their visits they wander through so many thousands of miles of sea! These fish always struggle up as

nearly as possible to the mountain springs, often bounding over mill-dams of many feet in height, if the body of falling water be sufficient. They swim over shoals where there is sometimes not depth enough to cover them, and deposit their eggs on the margins of the little upland pools. They then return to the ocean, and make their way towards the icy North Sea. The young brood are hatched in the fall; and, by a strange instinct, follow their parents on their formidable voyage, without even the aid of a guide.

Formerly, the salmon were so common in the Delaware River, that the water was black with them when in season; and when boys were bound out as apprentices, it was usual, in drawing up the indentures, to bind the master not to oblige the lad to eat salmon more than four or five times a week, because it was then the cheapest food in the market—now, there is not one left!

The herring were once still more plenty, and the shad almost as abundant; but, by catching and eating so many of the parents on their way in from the sea, we have reduced the race of herrings very

seriously, and there is danger that the shad will almost disappear from our waters, unless laws wiser than those now in force should be enacted to protect them.

Salmon are still plenty in the New England rivers; and in California and Oregon they swarm so in the large streams and about the great falls, that they can be speared, caught in buckets, or tossed out with the hands, in quantities sufficient to supply whole tribes of Indians with food throughout the year. But, as Providence never excuses the prodigal waste of his blessings, there is little doubt that they will fade away rapidly from those streams, like the buffalo from the prairies, now that a dense white population is about to occupy those distant regions.

Having made these remarks, Uncle Thomas passed the book to Mr. Williams, who continued to read the conversation between Charles Dalton and his mother.

“Thus far,” said Charles, “the fishes we have talked about are tolerably interesting animals, but those hideous whales which seem to me to be nothing but huge masses of blubber—I never could tell how

any body could be induced to spend their lives in catching them."

"And yet, I dare say," replied his mother, "that many a hardy seaman engaged in this occupation, would tell you it was a far nobler sport than standing all day by the side of a quiet stream, waiting for a bite from some little fish not bigger than your hand. Of our whale fisheries, however, the *sport*, as these men will sometimes call it, is by no means an important consideration connected with the subject. But I suppose it will hardly accord with your taste to enter upon any further discussion upon so hideous a monster as you think the whale?"

"Oh, yes!" said Charles, "I should like to hear something about the sperm whale; for if what we call spermaceti be a part of it, certainly that looks pure enough."

"Ambergris too," replied the mother, "is one product of the sperm whale, though all do not yield it. As much as fifty pounds of ambergris have been extracted from one single whale; and such is the esteem in which this article is held, that it sells frequently at one pound an ounce."

“But the spermaceti?” said Charles. “I want to know about that.”

“I can tell you nothing more about the spermaceti,” replied his mother, “than that the kind of whale in which it is found is chiefly remarkable for the enormous size of its head, and that within the head is a large cavity divided into a great many compartments, filled with a kind of fine oil, which is fluid when the animal is alive, but which afterwards assumes the concrete form in which we see it, when it is called spermaceti. The throat of this animal, unlike the Greenland whale, is so large as to be capable of receiving the body of a man; but the peculiarity which strikes every beholder as most remarkable, is the extraordinary size of its head, the length of which is about one-third that of the whole body.”

“How can the monster swim with such a head?” asked Charles.

“Instead of this head being an impediment to its swimming,” replied his mother, “it rather adds to its agility; for, the greatest part of it containing oil, the head has a tendency to rise so far out of the water as

to assist the purposes of respiration; and when the animal wishes to increase its speed, the lower portion of the head bearing considerable resemblance to the form of a ship, the mighty animal, sometimes seventy or eighty feet in length, is thus enabled with the greatest ease to cut its way along the ocean."

"What a horrible thing it would be to meet," exclaimed Charles, "if one happened to be out in a boat, and just in its way!"

"You may well say so," replied his mother, "especially if you have ever heard of its blowing."

"Blowing! what is that?" asked Charles.

"It is one of those peculiarities," replied his mother, "which distinguish this whale from others. By blowing, is meant the act of throwing up water from the snout with a loud roaring noise, which it does on rising to the surface of the water at regular intervals; and when vast numbers of these stupendous animals are amusing themselves together in this manner, the effect of such a commotion upon the voyager who witnesses it for the first time, has often been described as truly astonishing. Perhaps you have never heard of this whale leaping out of the water?"

“Leaping!” exclaimed Charles. “Surely these moving mountains do not leap.”

“The whale is said,” replied his mother, “notwithstanding its size, to be remarkably timid; and whether from fear, or only in sport, it sometimes performs astonishing feats of agility and strength, one of which is to descend a certain depth into the sea, and then, by violent strokes of its powerful tail, to increase its velocity, so as to dart completely out of the water; which extraordinary performance it generally repeats three or four times in succession, to the terror of the seamen who may have been bold enough to approach it. It has also a trick of rolling over and over on the surface of the water, especially when harpooned; in which case it will sometimes coil around its body an amazing length of rope. But you shall hear a short description of the sport of catching some of the smaller whales of this species, from the journal of a traveller.

“‘Yesterday,’ says he, ‘a shoal of large fish, a species of whale, were descried close to our ship. We were walking on the deck at the time, and had a full view of them, as they tumbled and spouted on their

way, just under the stern of the ship. Three of our boats were lowered, and manned in a moment, and a chase after them commenced. At the distance of half a mile, we saw the darting of a harpoon; immediately after, the water dashing high in the air; and then, a boat rushing with astonishing velocity after the animal, to which it was fastened. From a defect in the iron, however, this fish was not secured. Shortly after, the first officer struck another, which instantly spouted a column of blood ten or fifteen feet high, and began plunging in the agonies of death. He threw his immense body almost entirely out of the water, and, while dying, thrashed the waves until he was covered in a bed of foam.

“ ‘All hands were engaged in towing the prey to the ship, when another shoal appeared just under our bows. A boat was quickly in the midst of them, as they sported along unconscious of danger. One of the largest became alarmed, only in time to receive a harpoon fully in his side, as he plunged round to escape it. He sprang once nearly his whole length into the air, and then diving into the deep, was soon out of sight; but the swiftness with which the boat

cut the waves after him, and the purple stream that marked its wake, told that the blow had been true. The boat continued to be hurried with the speed of a race-horse, first in one direction, and then in another, for more than half an hour, before the creature died.

“ ‘Unaccustomed to such feats, the whole scene was to us an exhibition of singular intrepidity. The process, in taking a full-sized whale, is precisely the same. The boats for this purpose are of the most slight, and apparently fragile construction, formed to move with the utmost rapidity, and to ride even on the crest of a wave. The harpooner stands erect on the bow, with a firmness and gracefulness which practice only could secure; while the boat bounds from height to depth, and from depth to height, of the swelling sea. At a proper distance, his eye fixed on his victim, he darts the instrument with a force, which would seem inevitably to throw him from his narrow foothold into the water, while the floundering animal, writhing in the desperation of death, puts the boat in constant jeopardy.

“ ‘The danger is by no means imaginary. Many boats are destroyed, and many lives lost, in whaling

voyages. The line—hundreds of yards in length—to which the harpoon is attached, is coiled in a tub in the forepart of the boat, and permitted to run off according to the power and speed of the whale to which it has been fastened, while one of the boatmen stands with a hatchet to cut it off, at a single blow, in case it should become entangled; as the delay of an instant might prove fatal, and the boat be irresistibly taken down by the animal. It not unfrequently happens, that an arm or leg of some of the men is caught in the line, as it glides with the quickness of lightning from the tub; and should not the limb be at once severed from the body, the poor seaman is, in a moment, hurried to an irrecoverable depth.’ ”

“I begin to think, mother,” said Charles, “that you and the writer of this description, have as high an idea of the *sport* of whale-catching, as I have of that of catching trout.”

“I don’t see why,” replied his mother, “my own feelings should be supposed to be the same as those of the writer of this description; yet, perhaps, if I were to confess the whole truth, I should say, I have sometimes fancied that, had I been a man, I should have preferred,

even for my sport, those occupations which required courage and effort, rather than those about which one must be stealthy and sly. As a mere amusement, however, that of catching whales would be as cruel as any other kind of fishing, and more objectionable than many, from the danger in which it involves the lives of those who pursue it."

"It has never occurred to me until just now," said Charles, "that whalebone must be a part of these great animals—their bones, I suppose; and yet it does not look like bone."

"You are right," replied his mother, "the whalebone, which is found in the true or Greenland whale, does not even answer the purpose of bone, as that is generally understood. The whalebone, or baleen, is suspended from the upper jaw of the whale, and consists of plates curved longitudinally, which give to the mouth the form of an arch. These plates, which are more than three hundred in number, are compactly arranged along the roof of the mouth, which is not supplied with teeth, and from their having a thick internal covering of hair, they serve to entangle

and retain those small particles of food upon which this enormous animal subsists."

"Small particles?" said Charles, "I should have thought it would have eaten sharks at least, or, perhaps, dined upon a sea-horse, and made a supper of some score of porpoises."

"So far from this," replied his mother, "the food of the whale constitutes not the least remarkable feature in its character. I have told you they have no teeth, and therefore they cannot prey on fishes bearing any comparison to their own size. Besides which, their throat is so narrow as not to admit anything larger than would be swallowed by an ox. Yet still they have their pasture grounds in the great deep, vast portions of those spaces where the whale is chiefly found consisting of what is called green water, while in other parts it is yellow or red; and, on examination, this colour has been found to arise from the water being filled with myriads of animalcules, most of them invisible without the aid of a microscope; and although these extremely minute creatures are not immediately the prey of the whale, they constitute the food of the shrimps, cuttle-fish,

&c., upon which the monster of the deep subsists. When the whale feeds, it swims with great velocity below the surface of the water with its jaws wide open. A stream of water thus enters its mouth, and along with it large quantities of minute animals, which the whalebone is so constructed as to detain, not allowing a particle the size of the smallest grain to escape. There is also another peculiarity in the construction of the whale, which is worthy of remark, as exemplifying the admirable adaptation of all the works of creation to the situation and the use for which they are designed. It would seem that an animal of the size already described,—enclosed as it is in a blanket or wrapper of fat, which is called blubber, and which, in some whales, is so thick as to weigh twenty tons,—would be too ponderous and unwieldy to make its way in the water, and especially to rise to the surface. Had this soft wrapper consisted of common fat, as found in other animals, such would have been the case; but the fat of the whale is, in reality, only a modification of the true skin, always firm and elastic, extending to the thickness of two or three feet, yet possessing such density and

elasticity that, the more it is pressed, the more it resists; and thus it buoys up the living mass in the water; while, at the same time, from being a bad conductor of heat, it enables the whale, which is a warm-blooded animal, to endure the cold of the polar regions where it is chiefly found."

"After all," said Charles, "wonderful as this monster unquestionably is, one never can feel any interest in so huge a mass of living matter, especially when one thinks of it as being enclosed in a blanket of fat."

"It is not, I confess," replied his mother, "a pretty object for a drawing-room, if that is what you mean by being interesting; yet I imagine there are traits of character in the whale, which might raise it to some consideration in the opinion of those who value the feeling of a mother for her offspring."

"And pray what may they be?" asked Charles, not yet quite a believer in the interesting character of the whale.

"Its fondness for its young;" replied his mother. "I remember hearing an anecdote of a whale, and I believe there are many of a similar nature, fully authenticated—A whale and her cub, who had got

into an arm of the sea, where, by the falling away of the tide, they were entirely enclosed. In this situation the people on shore came down upon them in boats, with such weapons as could be collected, and the animals were soon so severely wounded that the water was coloured with their blood. After several attempts to escape, the mother forced her way over the shallows into the depths of the ocean; but though in safety herself, she could not bear the danger to which her young one was still exposed; she therefore rushed in once more where the smaller animal was imprisoned, and, as she was unable to carry it off, seemed determined to share its danger. The tide, however, flowed in, before either were secured; and thus, both were enabled to escape, though with a multitude of wounds."

"Thank you, mother," replied Charles, "for this long history about whales. I think I shall like them better for the future; at all events, I shall try to remember, when I object to any living thing on account of its being too large, that its affection may possibly be in proportion to its size."

"And now, Charlie," said Uncle Thomas, when Mr. Williams had finished reading, "shall we go out upon the dam, to-morrow morning, and catch some pike, by striking on the ice, and then cutting through, and taking them out, before they recover from the stunning effect of the blow?"

"I do not know," replied Charlie; "do you think we can catch them without hurting them? I don't think I shall ever put a worm on a hook again; and, as the fish at least must suffer, even when taken in a net, where there is no need of bait, I feel as if it was wrong to disturb them in any way."

"Yes indeed, that is right, Charlie!" remarked Mary; "for Uncle Thomas told us, on the journey, that we ought not to hate or despise any of God's creatures, not even a toad or a mule, because they are all useful in their way, and they are all our brothers and sisters. Surely, then, we should not kill them or put them to pain."

"But, my dear children, we must not allow that family relationship to prevent us from using these humble members of the great family of Nature, for

the very purposes for which they were created," observed Uncle Thomas, smiling. "I said they were all useful, it is true," he continued, "but many of them are chiefly useful for the purpose of being eaten.

"If God permits swallows to eat butterflies and spiders to eat flies, it is not very remarkable that he should give us an appetite for the flesh of oxen, sheep, and fish. There is no mode of killing a pike less painfully, than by stunning it by a blow on the ice, as it comes up to sun itself, close to the surface, on a bright winter day; and as I should like a dinner of fresh fish to-morrow, very well, the only reason why I will not press Charlie to make a hunting excursion on the dam, to obtain a supply for the larder, is, that I do not wish to deprive the poor fishermen, whom Charles Dalton so despised, of their little profits in providing for the tastes of those more blessed than they, in fortune."

"Still, it seems very cruel," said Annie Williams.

"My dear children," exclaimed Mrs. Williams, "I am delighted to see you so tender-hearted; but we should not forget, while we are gratefully using, without abusing—not for sport, but for our proper com-

forts and necessities—the good gifts of Providence, that God is able to recompense, and, as a just God, must recompense all his creatures *for every unmerited suffering*. Let us only be sure that *we* do not make ourselves accountable *for their unnecessary sufferings*.”

“How happy, my dear Madam, would it be,” exclaimed Uncle Thomas, “if many older children in this world were taught to bear with more equanimity the existence of apparent evils—which, *if evils*, are incurable—under the influence of your beautiful philosophy. Two-thirds of our private heart-burnings—two-thirds of the spurious philanthropy which invokes the eradication of abuses by violent means, would cease to agitate society to the very verge of anarchy, or to render us individually unhappy and uncharitable, if the mass of mankind were properly convinced that all unmerited suffering *here*, is destined to be fully compensated *hereafter*. How trifling are all the possible ills concentrated upon this *point* of time, in the history of a boundless eternity of being!”

“We are getting too deep for our hearers,” remarked Mr. Williams; “Emma is nodding, and the President is sound asleep; so, I move an adjournment.”

The old folks smiled; and the little ones kissed their parents and retired to their prayers and their rest. Uncle Thomas and Mr. and Mrs. Williams continued their conversation late into the night; but, as they talked about abolition, and the rights of women, and the Hungarian Revolution, and a thousand other things about which the young ones, for whom this book is written, do not often trouble their heads, Uncle Thomas, the Secretary, forgot to take notes of their sayings.

A RIDE TO THE LAKE.

ON Wednesday morning, Mr. Williams ordered up the great sleigh and four horses, and, stowing away in it the whole Christmas party under a parcel of warm buffalo robes, drove off towards Wilkesbarre to enjoy the bracing air. When they arrived in town, they left Willie, and Annie, and Charlie at the house of a friend, to enjoy themselves, with some young playmates, till evening, while Uncle Thomas and their parents dashed over the river and up the mountain gorge, to Harvey's Lake, one of the prettiest little sheets of water in the world, embosomed in tall pine trees, amongst hills almost a thousand feet high. There lived, in this highland wilderness, an old lady, for whom both the gentlemen and Mrs. Williams had a high respect. She and her husband had managed a small farm there for many years, and, although cut off almost entirely from society, they contrived to give

their children a good education, and, on the table of their rude log cabin, you would find not only the Bible and the necessary school-books, but many volumes of the best old English writers, and the classic English poets.

My little readers, who reside in cities, must not give way to the idea that even the poorer class of American farmers are generally ignorant of everything but those matters which relate to their laborious profession: this is an idle notion of certain very consequential people, who are themselves extremely ignorant of everything that happens beyond their own narrow circle. I am sorry to say, from long experience, that the desire for knowledge is generally greatest where the means of obtaining it are rarest.

This "Lady of the Lake" was now a widow, and her oldest son managed for her the few cleared acres that constituted her slender inheritance. She was dressed in a homespun petticoat and short-gown, it is true; but the presents which the gentlemen had stored for her in the sleigh, proved her no ordinary woman.

Besides many a little luxury, which Mrs. Williams meant as a slight acknowledgment for former kindness in sickness, her husband had provided a complete set of new school-books for the children, and Uncle Thomas added half a dozen volumes of the best and newest works of the day, for the gratification of the widow herself.

As neither Mary nor Emma had ever seen a lake, they begged, and were permitted, to join the company; and, though the water was frozen and covered with snow, so that they could form but an imperfect idea of its beauty, when rippling to the summer breeze, and kissing the wild flowers that bent over its margin, they had, at least, the pleasure, if pleasure it really be, of witnessing one of the winter sports of that wild region, which has its peculiar charms at every season.

Just as the sleigh arrived, the widow's son, with two of his young brothers and their dogs, had driven a noble buck from the forest on the lake, where a thick crust upon the snow supported the hunters, while the deer, with his narrow hoofs, broke through,

and lost all the advantage of his fleetness. They reached the cottage just in time to be "in at the death."

We cannot afford time to tell how glad the widow was to see her old friends again, how delighted the children were, when presented with their new books, nor how difficult it was for the grateful young farmer to persuade his guests to accept of the deer in recompense for their kindness. Suffice it to say, that when the horses galloped into Wilkesbarre again, at four o'clock that afternoon, the carcass of the buck lay hanging across the sleigh, just behind the driver, and when the little Williamses got in, and the company started for home, the young visitors had a thousand things to tell of the strange sights and scenes they had beheld among the hills. They expressed great surprise at meeting with so much genuine politeness and true refinement of the heart in a log cabin, and were astonished to find the mountain wilderness so near the beautiful towns and luxurious country-seats, that, in a few short hours, they were able to pass from the one to the other, and return again.

Charlie and Annie looked as if they pitied the

strangers for their ignorance, as displayed in these remarks, and little Willie pouted, and said,

“That’s always the way with your city people—all except Uncle Thomas—they seem to know nothing; but he knows everything.”

“I fear,” replied his mother, sternly, “that our young friends will think that country lads make up for their superior knowledge, by their want of proper manners.”

“Oh! no, indeed!” exclaimed Mary, with a blush; “if we had not forgotten that we were speaking of country people in the country, Willie would not have been offended.”

“So, Willie, you perceive,” remarked Uncle Thomas, smiling, “that however you and your city friends may differ in knowledge, you are almost equal in politeness. But, my children,” he added, as the sleigh drew up at the porch of their homestead, “endeavour always to remember this truth:—none are so wise, but they are ignorant of many things, and none are so ignorant, but they may teach the wisest.”



WRIGHT.

My Bird

THE THIRD NIGHT.

AFTER tea, on Wednesday, the little reading society met again, as usual.

The President took his seat with as much pride as ever, but Charlie had already discovered, what older children frequently find out, too late for their happiness, that the honours and profits of office rarely pay for its fatigues and troubles. The burden of supporting the dignity of his country, as her standard-bearer, tired him; so he resigned; and leaning his flag against the wall, quietly took his seat among "the common people."

"It is now the ladies' turn to choose a picture, from which we may get an idea for the story of the evening," said Uncle Thomas, "and I now propose that Annie make the selection."

"No, no," replied Annie, "let it be Emma; she is a stranger, and the youngest."

“Well thought, and well said,” remarked Mr. Williams; “so let it be, then.”

Emma opened the portfolio, and tumbled over the leaves for some time. At last, she met with a picture representing a poor little girl, who had a pet canary bird. She had just opened the cage door to play with it, and smooth down its feathers, and the foolish bird was frightened at her best friend, and hopped out into the very jaws of her worst enemy; for the cat had been watching the bird for a whole hour, looking so mild and placid all the while, that I am sure no little bird in the world would think there was any harm in her: yet, the moment the timid creature left the cage, puss seized it with her great sharp teeth, and it fluttered, screamed, and died; while the poor little girl threw out her arms, and was too much terror-stricken even to cry!

“Oh, no! Don’t read about that,” exclaimed Annie. “I had once a dear little bird myself, and the cat killed it. I can’t bear to hear about that.”

“And you loved your bird very dearly?” asked Uncle Thomas.

“Oh! ever so dearly,” she replied, with a tear in her eye.

“Well, then,” he continued, “we will not read about cats this evening, but I have here a little story about a bird, which I am sure will interest you very much. It is not an unhappy one in the end; though, like all histories of life, it has sorrow as well as pleasure in it. As you are so fond of birds, you shall read it yourself, and we will listen.”

So Annie was seated at the head of the table, as the oratrix of the evening. Her voice trembled a little at first, but she soon recovered from her embarrassment, and read, in a clear tone, the story that my little readers will find on the next page.

THE MESSENGER BIRD.

AT that memorable epoch when so many distinguished families were plunged, by the horrors of the French Revolution, into the greatest wretchedness, there lived in Paris a family by the name of d'Erlau.

M. d'Erlau was blessed with a superior mind and a noble heart. His wife was an excellent and amiable woman; and their two children, Henry and Lina, resembled their good parents.

When the troubles broke out, M. d'Erlau left the capital, and retired to a country-seat, situated between the rivers Rhine and Vosges, where he lived with his family in perfect retirement. Removed from the bustle of the world, he was content to reside in this charming spot, which was surrounded with vineyards, fertile fields, and groves of fruit-trees. The inhabitants of the neighbouring village, who commonly saw him only a few weeks in the year,

rejoiced greatly when he came to establish himself among them. His chief occupation was in doing them good; and though the country around him resembled a garden for its beauty and neatness when he went there, it was made, by his exertions, a terrestrial paradise.

M. d'Erlau found time in his retreat to superintend the education of his children, and his happiest hours were those which he devoted to their religious instruction; for he had long felt that religion alone can ennoble the soul, give happiness in life, and sustain us in the hour of death. Madame d'Erlau, whose mind was deeply imbued with the same sentiments, was always present at these instructions, and occasionally added a few words suggested by maternal affection. During this period of uncertainty and danger, the father spoke to his children, with peculiar emotion, of a divine and overruling Providence. Their mother shed mingled tears of sadness and pleasure when she looked upon them, destined as they were to live in a world of care and trouble, yet, as she firmly trusted, secure in the guardianship of that almighty Power, which ever watches over those it

loves. Her earnest and affectionate appeals to them, coming as they did from the heart, could not fail to make an impression upon Henry and Lina, who listened to their mother with reverence and attention; and not unfrequently, during these conversations, tears of sensibility glistened in their eyes.

The most perfect serenity, and that courage which is the offspring of a reliance upon Providence, reigned throughout the family, notwithstanding the perils which daily threatened it.

Beside the religious instruction of his children, M. d'Erlau also taught them all useful things, and did not neglect those ornamental branches which contribute to the innocent pleasures of life. He played extremely well on the piano, and both his wife and himself sang with great taste. These agreeable talents they took pleasure in imparting to their children.

One evening they were all assembled around their piano. It was near the end of the winter—music was the charm of their evenings. M. d'Erlau had composed a little hymn for the children, to which he had adapted a sweet and touching melody, and had

also composed an accompaniment, simple enough for Henry to execute with his little hands upon the piano.

This had all been arranged without the knowledge of Madame d'Erlau, whom the children wished to surprise agreeably. After she had sung several beautiful airs, accompanied by her husband, he said to the little ones, "Now, Henry and Lina, it is your turn to give us a specimen of your musical talents." Henry seated himself at the piano to accompany his sister, who, with her harmonious and delicate voice, timidly sang the following verses :

Oh! thou divine, benignant Power,
To thee our youthful hearts we raise;
Accept at this sweet, solemn hour,
The humble tribute of our praise.

'Tis to thy providence we owe
The varied mercies we receive;
From thee our choicest blessings flow;
In thee alone we move and live.

When brightly beams the early day,
Thy praises should our lips employ;
For then night's shadows pass away,
And we awake to light and joy.

When in the gold and purple west
Slow sinks the glorious orb of day,
All nature seems with him to rest,
And wait his soul-reviving ray.

Thanks, for the blessings of the day,
We offer—and in calm repose
Our wearied limbs at length we lay,
And in sweet sleep our eyelids close.

To us no dangers bring alarm,
E'en though the gathering storm we see;
For Thou hast said, secure from harm
Are all who put their trust in Thee.

Whate'er of good or ill betide,
Thou, who to us the promise gave,
Wilt near thy children still abide—
Thou canst protect, defend, and save.

Madame d'Erlau was moved even to tears in hearing this little hymn. Never had a concert in the courts of princes given her half so much pleasure. "Yes," she cried, pressing her dear children to her bosom, "that blessed Being who has taken care of you hitherto, will always be your most powerful protector."

At that instant the door was violently opened, and armed men rudely entered the room. Their commander was distinguished by his large mustache; and his dark eyes, almost hid beneath their shaggy brows, sparkled with a menacing lustre. He came to arrest M. d'Erlau, who was compelled to follow him immediately to the town prison, without any other explanation of their conduct, than that he had been accused of royalism, and of hatred to liberty.

In vain did Madame d'Erlau kneel at the feet of this ferocious man. In vain did the burning tears course each other down her pale cheek, while she implored their mercy. She was brutally repulsed, as well as her children, who sobbed and raised their little supplicating hands to the soldiers. All was useless; M. d'Erlau was dragged from them by main force, and was hardly even permitted to take with him some few little comforts, to soften the hardships of his sojourn in the dungeon.

It would be impossible to describe the distress of Madame d'Erlau and her children. They were kept prisoners in their house, for fear that a knowledge of the treatment of M. d'Erlau might cause a disturbance

in the village, where he was so much beloved. In the deepest grief, and almost in despair, they wrung their hands and wept; and it was long before they could compose themselves sufficiently to receive any consolation. At length the pious and excellent mother endeavoured to comfort her children. "Let us have confidence in God," said she to Henry and Lina; "it is He who hath sent us this trial—He alone can give us strength to support it; his will be done."

When the soldiers who were stationed at their house had retired, Madame d'Erlau thought of nothing but the most probable means of rescuing her husband from his present captivity. As soon as she was set at liberty, she went to the town, and presenting herself to the justices, protested the innocence of M. d'Erlau, desired the testimony of the whole neighbourhood to the peaceable and retired life he had led, and the care with which he had avoided taking any part in public affairs, which he never even made the subject of conversation with any one. She threw herself at the feet of these hard-hearted men, who remained as insensible as stone, and who would not even permit

her to enter the prison of her husband. . Her anguish was aggravated to the highest degree, by hearing from them that in a few days he would probably be led to the scaffold.

When, after three days, she returned, she found her home filled with soldiers. They had taken possession of all the property, plundered the house, and made barracks of it. She found herself repulsed when she attempted to enter it, and was compelled to abandon this loved spot to its present brutal inhabitants. The thoughts of her children, all this time, terrified her mind, for they were no longer there; and as all her servants had been driven away, no one could tell her what had become of them. Night was approaching, and she knew not whither to turn, or where to seek a shelter, when she had the happiness to meet with her faithful old servant Richard, who said to her, "Dear and excellent lady, you run the risk of being arrested every moment; in your distress you have permitted some words to escape you, which have been reported to the authorities by evil-disposed persons. You have spoken of injustice, of cruelty, of oppression, exercised under the mask of liberty; and

the only means of safety left to you is to fly. It would be too dangerous for you to attempt to conceal yourself; you could not save your husband, and to remain here longer would be destruction to you. Your children are at my house; let me beg you to go there also. I will this night accompany you to the house of my brother, the old fisherman of the Rhine; he will convey you across the river with your children, and your life, at least, may then be in safety."

Madame d'Erlau went with the kind old man, who lived in the village; but, on reaching his house, a new sorrow awaited her. On the day of her mother's departure Lina fell ill, through grief and terror. She was much worse when Madame d'Erlau arrived, and the poor child was in a raging fever. She was quite delirious, and did not even recognise her mother. Madame d'Erlau could not think of leaving her dear Lina in this dreadful state, and firmly refused to go; but the physician whom she found there, remonstrated with her in the most earnest manner. "Your child, Madame," said he, "can live but a few minutes longer, and she may be considered as already gone; your presence can do no earthly good; let me implore

you to think only of the solemn duty of preserving your own life."

With her eyes bathed in tears, and pale as death, the broken-hearted mother lingered by the bedside of her beloved child, without being able to summon courage to depart. The physician repeated his entreaties, and took her gently by the arm, to lead her out of the room; but, seized with a sort of shuddering, she returned to her daughter, and clasped her to her bosom with an expression of the deepest anguish. "No, no, my dear child," said she, "I cannot abandon thee; I care not for my life, it is nothing; I will die with thee!"

Old Richard and his wife supplicated her, with clasped hands, to depart immediately, and promised to pay to Lina every attention that they could bestow upon their own child. "Night is come," said Richard, "and your only chance of escape is under favour of its obscurity; a single moment of delay may give birth to new dangers; and it is not only your own life which is in the issue, my dear and excellent lady, but that of my wife and myself; for it is prohibited, under pain of death, to keep any person

at one's house, without having apprised the police of it."

"Then, my beloved Lina," said Madame d'Erlau, "if I can no longer be of service to thee in this world—if my presence will only be the means of bringing these good and faithful servants to the scaffold, I will leave thee to the guardianship of Him in whom alone is my dependence. Farewell, dear angel! thou wilt soon be in those peaceful realms where innocence no longer suffers—where the tears shall be wiped from all eyes, and where we shall meet to part no more."

Little Henry, who was at his mother's side, took Lina's hand, and, melting into tears, sobbed out, "Dear Lina, thou wilt soon be a beautiful angel in heaven; thou wilt be happier there than in this world, where we are in constant terror and distress. Oh that I could go with thee!"

The unhappy mother then knelt beside the bed of her child, and remained a few moments engaged in earnest prayer. She then rose, embraced her daughter once more, and taking Henry by the hand, hastily quitted the room, as if fearing to trust herself to remain an instant longer.

Madame d'Erlau then followed the faithful Richard, who had prepared whatever was most necessary for her journey. He walked before, heavily laden. The poor lady, with a package under her arm, followed him, leading little Henry by the hand, who had also his burden to carry.

They all three preserved the most perfect silence. The night was stormy—the wind blew furiously, and the rain fell in torrents. The old man broke the silence by observing, in a low voice, that the tempest, the darkness and the rain, were so many blessings of Providence, which protected them from the rage of their persecutors. “By a bright moonlight,” said he, “we should infallibly have been discovered. What appears most dreadful to us, is often made subservient to our good. It is thus with all the tribulations and miseries of life.”

They arrived at last at the habitation of the old fisherman, who received them with kindness, and conducted them into a little chamber blackened with smoke, and lighted only by the dim lustre of a lamp. While, with the aid of Richard, he carried his boat to the Rhine, his wife offered some of her homely

fare to her guests, who, trembling with fear and cold, could hardly be persuaded to taste anything. Richard and his brother soon returned, and they went towards the river to embark.

The moon was just rising, and peered occasionally through the clouds, softening the horrors of the darkness. Madame d'Erlau felt a sort of cold shuddering pass over her frame, when she found herself at midnight on the shore of this formidable river, whose waves, lashed almost to fury by the wind, were foaming at her feet. She was about to cross this rapid and dangerous flood in a fragile bark, which seemed hardly strong enough to carry two people. The old fisherman entered the boat, took his oar, and said, with pious confidence, "God will help us to pass over."

Richard then took his leave. When the house had been plundered, this faithful servant had been so fortunate as to save a box and watch of gold, as well as a pair of ear-rings set with precious stones. These he gave to Madame d'Erlau, adding to them a few pieces of gold which he had saved from his wages when he was in her service, though he had too much delicacy to tell her that they were his own. He

kissed the hand of his beloved mistress, and burst into tears as he pressed little Henry to his breast. "I am old," said he, "dear lady, and most probably I now see you and this sweet boy for the last time; I can do nothing more for you, but God will protect and save you. You will yet see happier days, with his blessing; for such people as you and my dear master are not born to remain long in misfortune. I would go with you, but I may perhaps find means to preserve a life dearer to you than your own; I will hazard all to save him."

Their tears flowed afresh, as the old man uttered these words. Madame d'Erlau commended her husband and her daughter to him; he promised all that she requested of him, and he then assisted her and the little boy to enter the boat. As soon as the bark was loosened from the shore, Richard fell on his knees, and, raising his hands to heaven, prayed fervently for the deliverance of the fugitives. "God grant," said he, "that I may at some future time announce to thee that of thy husband and thy daughter."

Madame d'Erlau and her son arrived in safety on the other shore of the Rhine, and there they were secure from immediate molestation; but they were afraid to remain, on account of the difficulties which threatened the emigrants of France; moreover, the theatre of war approached nearer every day. Following the advice of the good old Richard, who had taken pains to inform himself what was best to be done, Madame d'Erlau pursued her way along the shore of the Rhine, and journeyed towards Switzerland. Being informed that this country would be too expensive for her scanty means, she was advised to pass into Suabia, and, after having wandered about for some time, she reached the borders of the Tyrol. Here, by the aid of one of those charitable people who are always seeking some opportunity of doing benevolent acts, she was offered a home in the cottage of an old Tyrolese.

She immediately took a guide to accompany her, and to carry her small stock of baggage, and set out with her little Henry. Their route passed over several high mountains, and led them at last to a deep, narrow valley, bounded by gigantic rocks, at the foot

of which were seen a few low wooden huts. Above the flat roofs of these cabins appeared the steeple of a small chapel, and on the left side of the valley extended a forest of dark fir trees, finely contrasted with the tender verdure of the little fields below. Behind the forest, arose two enormous mountains, whose summits seemed to cleave the heavens, and were lost to view amid the fleecy clouds that hovered around them.

Their guide pointed out the little hamlet to his companions, and said, "There is Schwarzenfels! it is there the good old man lives who has promised to receive you at his house." The poor lady sighed, and began to descend the path that led to the foot of the mountain.

The old Tyrolese, who expected his guest that day, came out, with another venerable old man, to meet her. His mild, cheerful, benevolent countenance, said more in his favour than any courtly phrases could have expressed, and of which, in truth, he knew nothing. But notwithstanding his rural simplicity, he had that politeness of the heart which is not always manifested by people of higher birth and

breeding. To testify his respect for the stranger whom he was about to welcome to his house, he had that day taken pains to dress himself in his gay Sunday coat, his scarlet waistcoat, and his fine green hat, surmounted by a feather; this, as my young readers may not perhaps understand, being the costume of his part of the country.

“You are heartily welcome, lady,” said he to Madame d’Erlau, “and may God bless your arrival. I am truly glad to be able to afford you and your son a home under my humble roof.”

His good old wife, who was also neatly dressed for the occasion, and who, notwithstanding her white locks, still preserved a fresh complexion and fine health, was standing at the door. She advanced toward Madame d’Erlau, extended her hand to her, and said, “May God be with you, dear lady; come in and partake of our cabin fare. Our repast will soon be ready, but you will be obliged to satisfy yourself with but little. We have hardly anything better to offer you than oaten bread, milk, butter, and potatoes.”

The Tyrolese conducted Madame d’Erlau into a

small room, from which there was a fine view of the neighbouring forest, and the snow-capped mountains that towered above it. A table, a bench, a couple of chairs, and an earthen stove, painted green and highly varnished, formed the whole furniture of this room, to which was joined a little bed-chamber. Madame d'Erlau returned thanks to Heaven for having provided her such an asylum.

She arranged her little household conformably to the circumstances in which she was placed. She prepared her own meals, and spent the rest of her time in sewing and embroidery, by which means she earned a scanty pittance, sufficient, however, for her limited wants. But her greatest source of uneasiness was to see Henry without any occupation. He had already begun the study of Latin, in which his mother could have instructed him herself, but that they had no books. One morning, when she was indulging sorrowful reflections upon the subject, she was startled from her sad reverie by the sound of the chapel bell. The old Tyrolese entered the room with pious eagerness, and informed her that a pastor from the other side of the mountain was about to have service in

the chapel. Madame d'Erlau immediately went, accompanied by her son.

After the service was finished, she conversed with the pastor, and discovered, from all his conversation, that he was not only pious, but amiable and enlightened. He promised to procure necessary books for her, and undertook to give Henry lessons of some hours every day, if he would take the trouble to climb the mountain, and come over to the other side where he lived.

Henry was delighted with this offer, and, as soon as he had some occupation, he was contented and happy. He had hardly patience to wait for his breakfast, before he went off on his daily visit to the good pastor; but when it rained several days together, the poor little boy had nothing to amuse him, and Madame d'Erlau anxiously sought some recreation for him, that might afford him occupation as well as amusement.

In this country there are multitudes of canary birds raised, which are sold by the people, into other countries. The old Tyrolese himself had an aviary, filled with these pretty little birds. Henry, finding

that they were not dear, and recollecting that Lina used always to have a canary bird, begged his mother to buy one for him. "We shall then," he said, "have one thing, at least, to remind us of our home."

His kind mother willingly consented to this gratification, and Henry ran to choose from among the canaries, that which he thought most nearly resembled the favourite of his dear Lina.

It was not long before the gentle little bird began to profit by the lessons of Henry. He would perch on his finger, eat crumbs of bread from his lips, and pecked at his pen when he was writing. Very soon he began to sing, and Henry could hardly express his delight.

"You should teach him a pretty tune," said the old Tyrolese to him one day; but Henry thought the old man was joking, for he had never heard that a bird might be taught a tune. The Tyrolese then took a little ivory flute, and played one of the wild, romantic airs of his country, inviting him to repeat it. The little boy, who had an uncommonly fine talent for music, easily accomplished it; and every day he played the same tune to his bird, who, at last,

imitated it with perfect precision. Henry leaped for joy at this discovery. The little bird and the flute became dearer to him every day; and when the weather was so rainy or tempestuous that he could not leave the house, he enlivened his own and his mother's solitude in making a little concert with his canary.

The time thus passed away, but sadly and heavily to Madame d'Erlau, to whose mind the thought of her husband and her daughter was ever present; and the remembrance of these beings, so dear to her heart, often made her tears flow fast, and deprived her of rest. All her endeavours to hear from them had proved fruitless; and she learned, only through the medium of a journal sent her occasionally by the good pastor, what was passing in France.

One evening, Henry returned gaily to the house, and hastened to give the papers to his mother, telling her that the pastor had not had time to read them particularly, but that he was sure they contained some good news. Madame d'Erlau, impatient to see their contents, read the first pages with eagerness, and, in effect, found some interesting articles, which

gave rise to a hope that she would soon be permitted to return to her country. But on one of the last columns she perceived a long list of noblemen who had been executed in France, for their attachment to the ancient government. Her horror may be better imagined than described, when, amid this unhappy list, she found the name of her husband! The paper fell from her hands, and, as if struck with a thunderbolt, she fainted and fell from her seat. With infinite trouble, she was recalled to life; but she fell so dangerously ill, that her situation very soon became almost desperate. Poor little Henry, who never left her bedside, became daily paler and thinner; and the old Tyrolese remarked sadly, "Autumn will shed its leaves on the grave of this poor lady, and perhaps her dear boy will never behold another spring."

After the flight of Madame d'Erlau from her native land, the faithful old Richard was far from remaining inactive. Having awaited the return of the fisherman, and receiving from him the assurance that Madame d'Erlau and her son had safely reached the other side of the Rhine, he was occupied solely with

the hope of finding some means by which he might save his master.

On the following morning, he went to the town, where he had a son named Robert, who had been compelled to serve in the National Guard. This young man, remarkable for his courage and address, was often stationed at the door of the prison where M. d'Erlau languished. Richard hoped that by these means he might save this excellent man. He consulted with his son, but all the projects they formed were impracticable. They agreed, finally, that Robert should watch for any favourable circumstances that might arise, and profit by the first good opportunity that presented itself. But for a long time they saw not the slightest probability of realizing their wishes, and these two generous men began almost to despair.

M. d'Erlau was at length condemned to death, and his sentence was to be executed on the following morning. The unfortunate prisoner, to whom they had not even vouchsafed light, was seated in the gloom of his dungeon, with his head resting upon his hands. He thought of his wife and children : it was

for them that his heart bled. He had never heard from them since his arrest, and knew not what had been their fate. Notwithstanding these numerous causes of affliction, his pious resignation never abandoned him for a moment. When the sentence of death was read to him, he raised his eyes to heaven, and said calmly, "Thy will, not mine, be done."

From that moment all his thoughts were directed to heaven—to that state upon which he was soon to enter.

While M. d'Erlau was absorbed in these pious meditations, a loud noise was heard without. The prison door was hastily thrown open, volumes of smoke poured into the dungeon, which was illuminated by the light of an immense fire. At the same moment a young soldier entered the prison, and cried out, "In God's name, fly for your life!"

This young man was Robert, the son of the good and faithful Richard. By the imprudence of some of the soldiers, the fire had been communicated to the house in which the prisoners were confined. The soldiers, who composed the guard, had thrown aside their arms and their coats, that they might be more

at their ease in extinguishing the fire. Young Robert, profiting by the first moment of confusion, snatched up the coat and arms of one of his companions, and ran with them to the dungeon. M. d'Erlau hastily threw on the coat which Robert presented him, and put on his head the tall military cap, surmounted by a feather and cockade; while Robert buckled on the belt, and put the musket within his arm. The long beard of M. d'Erlau heightened his resemblance to the ferocious looking soldiers of that epoch, and gave him an air altogether martial.

“Now,” said Robert, “go down stairs boldly, hasten to my father, whom you will find at the house of his brother, the old fisherman, on the bank of the Rhine.”

The appearance of this young man in his prison, had been to M. d'Erlau that of an angel, sent by Heaven to his rescue. He preserved all the presence of mind necessary to his situation. Feigning to be charged with an important commission, he descended the stairway gravely, and desired the men who were busied in putting out the fire, to stand back; crying to them in a bold and assured voice, “Make way, make way, good people!”

He gained the street, without having excited any suspicion, and soon reached the town gates. When without the walls, he went to the house of the old fisherman. It was near midnight when he arrived. The fisherman, hearing some one knock at the door, hastened to open it. He was at first terrified when he saw M. d'Erlau, whom he mistook for a soldier commissioned to arrest him as well as his brother; but he soon recognised him, and his first words were to return thanks for his preservation. Richard was also in the chamber; and as soon as he heard his beloved master's voice, he threw himself into his arms.

M. d'Erlau embraced the old man with tears of emotion, and implored him to let him know the fate of his wife and children. Richard told him that his wife and son had escaped; that Lina had been dangerously ill; but that she was now restored, and was asleep in the next room. But already the affectionate child had been awakened by Richard's exclamation of delight, and recognising her father's voice, flew to his arms, with tears of joy.

After the first moments of delightful emotion, M. d'Erlau hastened to depart. He desired at once to

leave a country which no longer afforded him any security, and which had become no better than a den of robbers. He wished to cross the Rhine in the same boat which had saved his wife and son, and, without losing more time, he departed with Lina. The old fisherman led the way, and Richard followed.

It was a starlight night. Our travellers approached the river, and found the skiff among the willows on its bank. But suddenly they heard the report of muskets behind them, and the cry of "Stop! stop!"

The fire, which had favoured the escape of M. d'Erlau, had been promptly extinguished. The soldiers speedily perceived the absence of their prisoner, as well as that of the clothes and the arms in which he had disguised himself. They immediately pursued him, and already their cries were heard so near that the unhappy fugitives were almost frozen with terror. They sprung hastily into the boat, and pushed off as rapidly as possible. The old fisherman, who could not enter it himself, was obliged to hide in the hollow of a tree.

Hardly had they advanced twenty paces, when the soldiers reached the river's bank, and began to fire on

the boat. The balls whistled around the unfortunate travellers. In this cruel distress M. d'Erlau made Lina lie down in the bottom of the boat, while they redoubled their efforts. A ball pierced the hat of M. d'Erlau, and several struck Richard's oar, while the overloaded boat threatened every moment to sink in the flood. At last they arrived at the opposite shore, fell on their knees, blessed God for having thus delivered them, and seated themselves on the trunk of a tree to repose from their fatigue and alarm. When they had recovered their strength, they continued their journey toward the mountains of Suabia, which, from the number of dark fir trees that cover them, have received the name of the *Black Forest*.

The object which M. d'Erlau had most at heart, was to discover the asylum of his beloved wife and son. In the neighbourhood of the Black Forest, resided an excellent peasant, an old acquaintance of Richard, to whose house the travellers first bent their way, to repose themselves for some days, and then continue their route. But they had hardly reached the house, when M. d'Erlau spoke of departing. "I cannot rest,"

said he to his faithful companion, "until I have found my wife and child. Thou sayest, my good Richard, that they are certainly in Switzerland; but how shall we be able to find them? Lina cannot bear so long a journey on foot, and it will be impossible for me to procure any other means of travelling in my present destitute condition."

Richard, on hearing this, drew from his pocket a purse filled with gold, and spread it out on the table. "You are not so poor as you think yourself, my dear master," said he; "all this is yours." M. d'Erlau, struck with surprise, looked first at this unexpected little treasure, and then at his faithful servant, without being able to speak. "When you were rich," continued Richard, "you were always beneficent. How many have shared your bounty! This gold, of which you then made so generous a use, has been restored to me while you languished in the dungeon, and your lady wandered, an exile, in a strange land. Though there is much ingratitude in the world, there yet exists some noble hearts, and I have found several persons who, not satisfied merely to return what you have given or lent to them, have

added something of their own, as a proof of their affection and gratitude towards their excellent benefactor."

M. d'Erlau then counted the gold. "There is much here," said he, looking upwards with an expression of pious thankfulness, "but how can we make it last?"

"We shall certainly have to exercise no little economy," replied the old man, "yet we may enter into Switzerland."

Richard, in fact, contrived to procure, at a very moderate expense, a horse and a small cart, with a canvass which might be drawn over it at pleasure, to protect them from the wind and rain. The travellers then commenced their journey. Richard insisted upon walking by the horse, which he did almost always, while his loved master and Lina remained in their humble little carriage. At last they reached Switzerland; but they could hear nothing of Madame d'Erlau, and they returned to Suabia.

The rigorous treatment to which M. d'Erlau had been subjected during his imprisonment, the anguish which his sentence of death had occasioned, the alarms and troubles which had accompanied his

flight, added to the fatigue of his journey, entirely exhausted his strength. He fell ill in a little village of Suabia, and there they remained, in the hope that rest might restore him to health.

Richard hired a small house, and supplied it with necessary furniture, superintending the little household with the utmost zeal and intelligence. Lina did her best to aid him, and worked unremittingly from morning to night. Her poor father was at first compelled to keep his bed; and it was a long time before he could sit up, even for a part of the day. Lina watched over him with the tenderest solicitude; and tried every means to enliven him, and to dissipate his cares. She would sit by him, sing to him, read him some pretty tale, and amuse him with her gay and innocent prattle; while the good father, on his side, was not wanting in expressions of satisfaction and tenderness to his sweet little girl.

During this period, Lina's birth-day arrived. She went to church on that day; and there she lifted up her little heart in prayer for her dear father and mother. When she returned home, she found in the window of her room a large nosegay, composed of the

flowers she loved best, and whose brilliant colours, moist with the morning dew, were sparkling in the light of the sun. Near them was suspended a pretty little cage, containing a tufted canary, exactly resembling the one she had owned before she left Alsace.

Lina was delighted at the sight of the roses and the little bird, which recalled to her mind such pleasing recollections. The tears sprung to her eyes as she thanked her father, in words of filial tenderness, for this added proof of his affection.

“This humble gift is all I can offer thee, my dear child,” said M. d’Erlau. “In times past, thy birthday was one of rejoicing throughout the village; but now, we must celebrate it in a manner suitable to our new situation.”

Richard had taken care to provide a dinner rather better than common; and, during the repast, M. d’Erlau almost forgot his sorrows. His good old servant, at the dessert, put on the table a bottle of Alsatian wine, which he had brought with him. M. d’Erlau drank to Lina’s health, and then to that of his wife and son; but the remembrance brought tears to his eyes.

"Dear Lina," said he, "where are now thy beloved mother and brother? Who can tell all the ills to which they may be exposed at this moment! Without friends, without a protector, how many dangers may beset them! We know not even if they still live, to celebrate the anniversary of thy birth, my child. The confidence I feel in an Almighty Protector inspires me with courage; but there are moments of unutterable sadness, that almost overwhelm me! I fear, I fear, my dear child"—

Lina, overcome with emotion, interrupted her father, by throwing herself into his arms.

"Be comforted, my dear papa," said she to him; "God will never forsake us; He will one day reunite us; it is not in vain that He has saved us in so miraculous a manner; He will watch over us!"

"Yes, without doubt," said Richard, wiping away the tears which fell from his eyes; and they all remained, for a few minutes, in pious reflection. Suddenly, the canary interrupted their silence by singing the little hymn, "Oh thou divine!" &c. Lina, struck with astonishment, clasped her hands and exclaimed, "Oh, my dear papa, that is the very melody

that Henry was playing upon the piano, and that you taught us! It is the air we were singing when the soldiers came to arrest you!"

M. d'Erlau, Richard, and Lina, continued in breathless surprise to fix their eyes on the canary bird, which repeated the air three times; it was precisely that of the hymn.

"This is indeed astonishing!" said M. d'Erlau. "Dare I hope that my dear wife and child may at last be restored to me? They alone could have instructed this little bird. Tell me, Richard, how did it fall into thy hands?"

Richard replied that he had bought it the day before from a young Tyrolese.

"Run, run, I entreat thee," continued M. d'Erlau, "run, my good Richard, and try to find this young man; perhaps he may be able to give us important information."

Richard immediately left, and remained absent the greater part of the day. M. d'Erlau and his daughter awaited his return impatiently, and formed many conjectures, some of which were very unpleasant,

when they thought of the circumstances which might have induced Madame d'Erlau to part with this dear little bird. They even indulged the sad idea that both she and Henry were dead, and that this little canary was the only thing they had left.

At last Richard returned, accompanied by the young man who had sold him the bird. They eagerly questioned him, but could learn nothing of him, except that he had bought the canary from a young shepherd. Yet, on farther inquiry, he assured M. d'Erlau that, in the part of the country where he lived, there were a lady and a little boy who answered the description they gave of Madame d'Erlau and Henry; and that it was very possible the canary bird had once belonged to them. He added, that he saw this lady every Sunday at church, and that he often met with her son, who went to take lessons at the house of the pastor, in the neighbouring village. The Tyrolese described the features of the lady and her son so exactly, that Lina and her father both exclaimed, "There can be no doubt! we have found them at last!" They returned thanks to Heaven

with humble fervour, for having, by a peculiar providence, discovered to them the asylum of the beings dearest to them on earth.

M. d'Erlau informed himself with the utmost precision of the place where the lady lived, as well as the route which led to it, and recompensed the Tyrolese liberally for the fidelity of his recital.

They immediately prepared for their departure. M. d'Erlau had almost entirely recovered, and the joyful news he had just received had more influence on the re-establishment of his health than all the physician's art.

Early the next morning they bent their way toward the Tyrol. The cage was suspended from one of the hoops of the cart, and during the journey they had the pleasure of hearing the canary again and again repeat the little song.

M. d'Erlau, and his little caravan, arrived safely in the village, in the neighbourhood of which was the hamlet of Schwarzenfels. He immediately repaired to the house of the pastor, who confirmed all that the young Tyrolese had related to him. Madame

d'Erlau and her son still lived. "But the excellent lady," added the pastor, "is overwhelmed by the deepest grief. She believes that her husband is dead; and since she received this fatal news, 'sorrow has,' indeed, 'filled her heart.' She fell ill in consequence of her distress, and we at one time despaired of her life. It is only recently that she has begun, though very slowly, to recover."

M. d'Erlau asked the pastor whence this false rumour could have arisen; on which he gave him a file of papers, and showed him the page which made mention of his execution. Though at first surprised, M. d'Erlau was at no loss for an explanation of this mistake. It might have been that they forgot to erase his name from the list of victims condemned to death, or left it by design, to avoid censure for his escape.

M. d'Erlau was deeply pained at the idea of the sufferings, the agonies, which this unfortunate news had caused his beloved wife. The pastor advised him to be extremely careful in permitting her to learn the reality. They consulted together, and the good pastor resolved to accompany M. d'Erlau to the

hamlet of Schwarzenfels, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather.

When they arrived at the summit of the mountain from which the hamlet was visible, its cabins appearing in the depth of the valley, half buried in snow, the travellers stopped, and took shelter beneath the tufted boughs of the fir trees. The pastor pointed out to his companions the cabin which Madame d'Erlau inhabited; and the faithful Richard, leading the way, began to descend the path which led to it.

Madame d'Erlau, dressed in deep mourning, was seated near the fire, whose wavering light faintly illuminated her chamber, already obscured by the shadows of evening. She was still occupied with her embroidery, and Henry was reading to her. When she saw her old and faithful servant enter the door, she uttered an exclamation of surprise, and the work fell from her hands. She ran to him, and mingled tears of pleasure and grief fell in abundance from her eyes. Henry was almost crazy with delight; and the old man found himself welcomed as a father.

Madame d'Erlau made him sit down by her side, and, when recovered from her agitation, she said,

“My good Richard, under what melancholy circumstances do we meet again! I dare not speak to thee of the bloody death of the most excellent of men! And Lina! what has become of her? Perhaps that dear child is now only dust and ashes!”

“Console yourself, my dear lady,” replied Richard, “she lives; and has been entirely restored to health. It was to hasten and determine your flight that the physician represented her in a desperate state.”

At these words the eyes of Madame d'Erlau beamed with indescribable brilliancy. “But,” said she, again relapsing into an expression of profound sadness, “why didst thou not snatch her from her unhappy country? why hast thou left her where, at each instant, she is exposed to new dangers? Is it possible that thou couldst resolve to depart without her!”

Madame d'Erlau was about to continue, when the door opened, and Lina flew into the arms of her mother. Henry ran to embrace his sister, and sweeter tears were never shed than those of this fond mother, while pressing her dear children to her bosom.

“But, very soon, busy remembrance awoke agonizing thoughts in her mind, and empoisoned these

first moments of happiness. "Oh!" said she, raising her tearful eyes to heaven, "if your dear father yet lived, my happiness would be complete; but, my beloved children, you are hapless orphans! The sight of you fills my soul with grief! What can I, poor widow that I am, what can I do for you!"

Richard, who had hitherto remained silent, began gradually to prepare her for the glad tidings he had yet in store for her; but she was more calm than he had expected. The emotion she had experienced in seeing him again, as well as her dear Lina, had prepared her mind for a still greater surprise. M. d'Erlau was near, and heard, with an emotion as great as her own, the whole of this conversation.

When Richard ventured, at last, to inform her that the account she had seen of her husband's execution was untrue, she sprang from her seat, exclaiming, "He lives! he lives! Oh, my dear children, he must be near! Let us fly to his arms!" At the same moment she was clasped to his heart.

Madame d'Erlau, who had so long lamented him as dead, could not realize her happiness in being restored to him. Trembling and fearful, as if she yet

doubted his existence, she looked fixedly at him, and could only say, "Oh, what happiness is reserved for us in heaven, where we shall again behold so many beings we have loved!"

The happy family spent the most delightful evening, and the good pastor, the old Tyrolese and his wife, shared their pleasure.

The following morning, Richard brought the little bird which Providence had destined to be the peculiar instrument of its designs, and which had been left, the evening before, at the pastor's house. Henry was much rejoiced to see his pretty canary, which had escaped during the time that Madame d'Erlau was ill; and they had heard nothing of it afterwards. M. d'Erlau related the manner in which it had fallen into his hands, and how it had served to discover their retreat. Madame d'Erlau was much affected at this recital, and said, with an expression of pious gratitude, "It is to our all-wise and almighty Father that we are indebted for all these mercies. He has used this little bird as a messenger to inform my dear husband of the place of my sad shelter. Without his goodness in restoring thee to me, I should not, in

all probability, have survived this sad and terrible winter."

"Was it not a good idea," said Henry, "to teach my little bird the tune of our hymn? I little thought, when I was lamenting over his loss, that he would be, under Providence, the means of restoring my dear father and sister to us. It shows us what you have often said to me, my dear mamma, 'that little misfortunes are sometimes wisely designed to produce great and happy results.'"

"Thou art right, Henry," replied his father; "thus, it hath pleased God to take from us our temporal riches, to endow us with those which are more noble and precious; and I trust that these trials will increase in us that wisdom which is far preferable to any sublunary good; though it may be, that the same beneficent hand which hath given back to thee thy little treasure, may, one day, restore to us our earthly possessions."

The young shepherd, who had been employed by Henry to look for his canary bird, and who, instead of bringing it to him, had disposed of it to a bird-seller, was not a little troubled when the pastor, having

sent for him, told him by what means this bad action had been discovered, at a distance of several leagues. "I shall never do the like again," said the young man, struck with salutary fear; "for I now see that one can do nothing so secretly that it will not come to the light."

M. d'Erlau resolved to pass the winter in the valley of Schwarzenfels. He remained with his family at the house of the good old Tyrolese, and Richard found a lodging in one of the neighbouring cabins. The canary took the place he had occupied before his flight. Lina attended to him with the tenderest care; and, notwithstanding the wintery season, his cage was always adorned with verdure. Often, while they were all seated in this room, while the valley was half buried in snow, the little bird warbled the melody of their favourite hymn. Monsieur and Madame d'Erlau, Lina and Henry, would all accompany him; and with this, and similar innocent and simple sources of enjoyment, each day found them happier and more contented.

"We may, indeed," they would say, "have confidence in that Being who has so miraculously aided us

by means of this little creature. He can succour us at all times, who has even to this day watched over us ; He will continue to us his paternal care."

"Yes," said the good old Richard, "I believe so too ; I am always moved to see those poor little birds who are there in the midst of the snow, exposed to the rigour of the weather. They recall to my mind the words of the holy Scripture : '*Behold the birds of the air, they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feedeth them ; are ye not much better than they ?*' Henry's little canary makes me feel yet more confidence in these blessed words. When I hear him warble his little hymn, I cannot despond, whatever ills we may at present be called upon to suffer. He who takes thought for the birds, can he forget us ?"

At last, the d'Erlau family, after enduring many privations, had the happiness to return to their native land, where they were put in possession of a large portion of their estate. They rejoiced at becoming rich, that they might prove their gratitude to those who had, in misfortune, been their best friends.

When Mary concluded this very touching little story, the conversation became general, and related chiefly to the history of that terrible revolution during which the family of M. d'Erlau was ruined, and came near being totally destroyed.

Uncle Thomas took the opportunity to teach Charlie, whose patriotism led him, young as he was, to say a great deal about the cruelties and vices of kings, how it happens that people who have been long oppressed, on suddenly gaining their "freedom," as it is commonly called, almost invariably become still more cruel and vicious than their former masters, and convert their ignorant and uncontrolled liberty, into the worst of slavery.

He explained the impossibility of that liberty which allows every one to do just as *he* pleases towards others; because, on that plan, every one must consent to let everybody have the privilege of behaving just as he pleases towards *him*; so that one man's liberty would be continually destroying another man's liberty, till every one would become a slave to his neighbour!

He explained in what true political liberty consists;

defining it to be, "the right to go where you please, when you please, and do just as you please, provided you do not tread upon your neighbour's toes;" and he proved that this kind of liberty can only exist where the laws point out every man's rights, and the people, while they consent to be absolute servants to the laws, remain the equally absolute masters of the men who make the laws.

He showed, also, that people who have been brought up under any kind of oppression, cannot immediately understand this plan; and hence that, whenever they are suddenly set free, they commit such outrages and abuses as are described in our story.

"We Americans," said he, "are educated to freedom from our earliest infancy, and so we know how to enjoy it properly; but it would be no more absurd to send a blacksmith to sea, as the captain of a vessel, than to expect France or Germany, or even England, to adopt American liberty, and be happy under it, before their people have been *educated* to understand it; and that will require a great many years. It required almost two hundred years, for our forefathers (living as they did, in the wild woods,

where there were no kings and princes to watch their sayings and doings) to become *fit to be free*! If Washington had lived fifty years sooner, he could not have been President of a Republic, but might, perhaps, have made himself King of America.

“Let me, then, beg of you, my children, to be very careful not to adopt any vice, or folly, or bad habit, while you are young; for, when we become used to such things early, one lifetime is not often found long enough to correct the fault.”

Charlie, and Annie, and Mary, all seemed very much interested in this discourse; even Emma tried hard to understand it; but the little President seemed more attentive than either:—he remained perfectly silent, and nodded his assent to everything Uncle Thomas said, till he nodded himself fairly on to the floor, and did not even wake with the fall! So, the chair being empty, the company adjourned with a hearty laugh, and all hands went to bed.



20000

SARTAIN.

My Mother



THE FOURTH NIGHT.

AFTER dining with a neighbour, and having a glorious snowballing match in the afternoon, the members of the Reading Society returned home, in company with another sleigh-load of little folks, to listen to the story of the night.

After taking tea, they were again collected in the sitting-room; the President cracked his whip, to command order, and Mary, with a blush, declared that she thought, as Annie had been so kind and polite to her guests, at the preceding meeting, she ought now to choose the picture, to give Uncle Thomas an idea for the story of the evening.

Annie, therefore, looked over the portfolio, and presently came up, smiling and colouring, to Uncle Thomas, and said :

“Dear Uncle, you taught us, t’other day, that we ought not to have prejudices against any of God’s

creatures, because they are all useful in their place ; so now, I have brought you a picture of a little girl playing with a cat and kitten. If puss did kill my poor little Dick, that used to sing so sweetly, I'll try to forgive her, because it was her nature, and God gave her that nature for some good purpose."

"Mother will not let us keep a cat," remarked one of the young neighbours, "because she says that Mrs. Smith found a kitten in her baby's cradle, trying to suck its breath!"

"I am much afraid," said Uncle Thomas, "that pet cats, brought up among children are more sinned against than sinning. It would be hardly more than just that the poor animals should occasionally suck a little breath from the dear little babies, for the dear little babies generally do all they can to *squeeze out the breath* of their unfortunate mousers. But this idea of cats sucking the breath, is entirely a mistake. Their mouths are so formed that such suction is altogether impossible. Yet it would be, perhaps, charitable and wise to leave the error uncontradicted ; for it might save many a kitten from torture, and the habit of these pets, to sit on the breast of a person

asleep, with their mouths close to the face, is, to say the least of it, injurious to health.

“Though the cat seeks that place only to enjoy the warmth of the body of the sleeper, and approaches the lips, partly from affection, and partly because the breath is even warmer than the body, her weight embarrasses one’s breathing, and disposes one to nightmare. Then, again, animals that feed on meats have usually a very foul breath; all air that has passed through the lungs is impure; and children, even more than grown people, require all the fresh air they can get, to preserve them in good health.

“You well know, however, how very useful cats are, in destroying vermin, and I am aware of no important injury that they do us, except that, when badly *educated*, they are apt to make free with the milk pans, and the provisions on the kitchen table, before and after dinner. I remember, indeed, to have seen one or two cats who did great mischief on a farm, by “sucking,” or rather, breaking and lapping the eggs, and killing young chickens.”

“Oh, yes!” exclaimed another of the visitors; “last winter, our Tom ate up all my Easter eggs!”

“I thank you for the hint!” replied Uncle Thomas; “I have a very interesting history, here, of the origin of Easter eggs; so, we will make it the subject of our evening exercises.”

Then he took the book from the pile on the table, and, as soon as the little folks were all seated, he began to read.

ORIGIN OF EASTER EGGS.

Many centuries ago, there lived several colliers in a small valley surrounded by forests and rocks. The huts of these poor people were scattered here and there upon the sides of the hills, a few cherry and plum trees shaded each house, and a cornfield, a little flax and hemp which they cultivated, with a cow and a few goats, were all they possessed. They earned something by working for a neighbouring forge; but they were certainly very poor; though not the less happy, for they coveted nothing more. Their hard and sober life, gave them the enjoyment of perfect health; and among them might be found men nearly

a hundred years old, and still enjoying the sober pleasures of existence.

One day, when the oats were beginning to ripen, a little daughter of one of the colliers, whose business it was to watch the goats, ran to the house quite out of breath, and told her parents that some strangers had just arrived in the valley. "They were," she said, "a grand-looking lady, with her two children, and an old gentleman, who, though very richly dressed, seemed to be only their servant. I met with them," continued the little girl, "while running after one of our goats; they are very much fatigued, and I am sure they must be very hungry; do let us carry them something to eat, and try if we cannot find them a place to stay to-night." As soon as the parents heard this account, they provided themselves with barley bread, milk, and cheese, and followed their daughter.

The strangers had stopped under the shade of a large rock, covered with bushes, where it was pleasant and cool. The lady was seated upon a mossy bank; a beautiful little girl was asleep on her lap, and her other child, a fine boy, was offer-

ing some thistles to the donkey, which the animal ate with avidity, while the old servant was unloading him.

The collier and his wife approached the strange lady with great respect; for they saw by the dignity of her appearance, and, what was in those days a peculiar mark of distinction, her white, flowing robe, that she was of high rank.

“Only look!” said the collier’s wife to her husband, in a low voice, “look at that beautiful ruffle so nicely plaited round her neck, and the fine lace that half covers her delicate hands; and those little shoes, ornamented with silver flowers!”

But her husband, displeased at these observations, reproved what he called “her foolish vanity,” adding, “that these pretty shoes had not prevented the lady from hurting her feet in their stony paths.”

They then offered to the noble stranger the refreshments they had brought with them. When she raised her veil, they were struck with the beauty of her features, and the sweetness of her countenance. She thankfully took the porringer of milk, and offered it to the little girl. Her eyes filled with tears on seeing

the child seize it with her little hands, and drink eagerly. The little boy soon came for his share; and it was not until the hunger of her children was appeased, that the lady thought of herself.

While they were eating, all the inhabitants of the valley came round them, in a circle, and after their slight meal was finished, the old servant begged these good people to provide the lady some place where she could remain for a short time, telling them that she would pay them liberally.

“Have compassion, I beseech you,” added the lady, in a sweet and touching voice, “upon an unhappy mother and her children, who have been cruelly forced to quit their native home.”

The inhabitants of the valley immediately consulted together as to the best means of assisting the unfortunate stranger. At the upper extremity of the valley, a small stream ran foaming among the rocks, and, at some distance below, it turned a mill, which looked almost as if suspended in the air. The miller had built a neat cottage upon the opposite bank; it was lowly, and of rude construction, as well as all the neighbouring cabins; but, surrounded with tall cherry

trees, and in the midst of a little garden, it presented a very pleasing aspect. This habitation, the miller offered to the unknown lady.

“That cottage which you see there,” said he, pointing with his finger, “I offer you heartily. It has never been occupied, as I built it to live in myself, when I give up the mill to my son. Providence guided you here just at the right time.”

The lady gratefully accepted this obliging offer; and, after resting a little while longer, she went to her new habitation, carrying her little daughter in her arms. The old servant took the little boy by the hand, while the good-natured miller led the donkey. They found the house very comfortable, as the miller had provided it with everything necessary—tables, chairs, beds, and in short all that was needful for the arrangement of a household. The lady had with her some rich carpeting and fine coverlets, and speedily made preparation for passing the first night in her new home. Before she retired to rest, however, she returned thanks to Heaven for having, after so many troubles and alarms, at last procured her so suitable an asylum.

“Who could have thought,” she said with a sigh, “that, brought up as I have been in a palace, I should esteem myself happy to be received in a poor hut. How much it is to the interest of the great to treat their inferiors with kindness. If a sentiment of humanity has no influence, prudence at least should; for who knows what may be in reserve for us.”

Early the following morning, the lady walked out with her children to take a look at the country, which her fatigue the day before had prevented her from doing. A beautiful spectacle soon presented itself to her view. The scattered huts of the colliers formed pleasing groups; and among them the stream, clear as crystal, wound its devious way. Wooded hills, rocks covered with moss, and bushes upon which the goats were browsing, were all lighted by the rays of the rising sun, and offered a picture to the eye, which a painter might have envied.

On seeing his lovely guest, the old miller came out of his mill, threw a plank across the stream, and advanced towards her. “Well,” cried he, when within speaking distance, “is there a more pleasant place in all the valley? Here we have the first light of day;

those cabins yonder are still in darkness, while the sun is already shining upon us; and while we can only see the tops of their chimneys through the fog, we have here a pure, clear sky."

The children were very much amused in their new home. They wondered at seeing the mill-wheel turn continually in the same place; they listened to the perpetual noise it made, and to the murmur of the water that bubbled over it. The little girl seemed to delight in watching the innumerable multitude of drops, like brilliant pearls, fluttering in the air, springing upon the wheel, and then falling confusedly into the water.

The lady spent the day in arranging her little household in the best manner she could. The good people hastened to supply her with provisions, wood, cooking utensils, and every thing she needed. The collier's little daughter, Martha, who had been her guide in the valley, entered into her service.

The lady, on examining her supplies, found that she had no eggs. "First of all," said she to Martha, "we must have some eggs; take this money, and get me some."

“Eggs!” said Martha, in astonishment; “what do you want with them?”

“To cook for dinner,” replied the lady. “Make haste, and come back quickly.”

“But,” said the little girl, “the birds do not lay eggs at this time of the year; and if they did, it would be a pity to rob them, for it would take several hundred sparrows’ or thistle-birds’ eggs to feed four people.”

“Birds’ eggs!” said the lady, surprised in her turn; “I did not ask for birds’ eggs, I meant hens’ eggs.”

The little girl shook her head. “I never heard of that sort of eggs before,” said she; “I never saw any.”

“What!” exclaimed the lady; “is it possible that you do not know what hens are?”

My young readers are probably astonished at the ignorance of the collier’s daughter; but their surprise will cease when they are informed that domestic fowls are brought us from the East, and that at the time to which my story refers, they were as rare in some countries as the peacock still is in many others.

As there was no meat to be had, the lady found herself much embarrassed. “I could never have be-

lieved," said she, "that an egg was so precious a gift of the divine bounty; but at present I am but too well convinced of it; this is not the first lesson that I owe to misfortune. Want and adversity teach us the value of those blessings which, in prosperity, we cannot properly appreciate."

The lady was compelled to submit to many other privations; though the good people of the valley did all in their power to mitigate the hardships of her new residence. If the miller happened to catch a nice trout or a few perch, he immediately offered them to his noble guest; and the old servant, also, was particularly attentive. She had with her a few valuable jewels, and other costly articles, which the old man left her occasionally to sell, and bought her in exchange many things useful in her household.

The inhabitants of the valley remarked, however, that each time old Kuno returned from his excursions, the lady seemed more afflicted and sorrowful. They desired much to know the reason of this, but had not courage to ask; and when they addressed their questions to Kuno, he repeated to them such odd, extraordinary names, which they found so difficult to pro-

nounce and so impossible to remember, that they concluded the old man was making sport of their curiosity. One day they took her little son aside, and said to him, "Do, now, tell us your mamma's name; whisper low, and we will keep the secret." The little boy replied in a mysterious tone, though in an amiable and confiding manner, "Her name is—mamma." The girl was not more communicative, and they were obliged to leave the mystery to be unravelled by time.

One day, old Kuno returned from an excursion, with a pannier on his back, containing several domestic fowls. When the children of the valley saw the old man coming, they ran to meet him, and assembled around him, for he usually brought them something that he thought would please them; to one a whistle, to another some dried figs, a bell for the goats, or similar trifles. This time the children were very curious to know what was shut up in this pannier, and covered with a cloth too thick for them to see through it. They accompanied the old man to the door of the lady's house, who came out with the little

girl, both evidently delighted at the promise of the contents of the pannier.

Kuno deposited his load on the ground, and raised a corner of the cloth, when a fine majestic cock sprung out. The surprised children started back. "What a strange bird!" cried they (for they did not know its name). "What a beautiful creature! Look at the crown on its head! it is of a brighter red than the pretty flowers in the meadow. What shining plumage! and the tail shaped exactly like a sickle!" They were almost as much delighted with the hens: there were two black ones with red crests, two white bantams, and two of a reddish-brown, without tails. The lady threw to them a handful of grain, and they all ran immediately to pick it up. The children, ranged in a circle round them, were amused at seeing them quarrel, and run after each other to dispute for the grains. When the oats were all eaten, the cock suddenly spread out his brilliant wings and began to crow. This produced a general shout of laughter among the joyous band; and all the way home, both boys and girls continued to repeat, *kookericoo! kookericoo!*

When they arrived at home, the children could

talk of nothing but the wonderful birds they had seen at the strange lady's house. "They are larger than most of our birds," said they, "even larger than the crows, and more beautiful than any of the birds of the woods."

"Oh," said little Marie, the youngest sister of Martha, "if you could only see the pretty little red bonnet one of them has on; I never saw the like!"

The parents were not less curious than their children, and, like them, manifested the greatest astonishment and admiration at the sight of these singular birds.

Some time after this, one of the hens was setting; so Martha showed the nest to the children one day, and they were much surprised at the great quantity of eggs. "Fifteen!" cried they; "our birds seldom have more than two at a time, and never more than five; how will the hen be able to feed all these little ones?"

When the chickens were nearly hatched, the lady sent for the children and their parents, and showed them an egg half opened, and they were greatly amused at seeing the little chicken trying to escape

from its transparent prison. But their admiration was yet greater when they saw these young birds, hardly out of the shell, and covered with a soft down, turn their little black, sparkling eyes from side to side, and run all about, while other birds are, at the same age, helpless, blind, and naked. Their pleasure was at its height when the stately hen, with her fine red crest, walked out, surrounded by her numerous family.

“Certainly nothing can be prettier than this,” said the collier.

“Listen!” said his wife. “Hear how the mother is calling to her young ones, and how well these little things understand their mother’s voice. How they follow and obey her! It would be a happy thing, if children would always be as docile and attentive to the voice of their parents.”

One of the little boys took up a chicken to examine it more nearly. It cried out; and, at the cry, the hen ran with her wings outspread, rushed upon the rash little fellow, and would have pecked out his eyes, if he had not let it go. The father scolded his son, while his wife said, “See with what care this

good mother watches over her little ones; it is a lesson for us."

When the sun hid his rays beneath the clouds, the whole brood ran to seek refuge beneath the mother's wings, and there found warmth and shelter. "This is the prettiest of all," said the colliers; "to see here and there a little head peeping from under the protecting wing of the mother, and then drawing back to avoid the coolness of the night."

The miller, who, with his powdered coat, made a droll figure in the midst of the blackened colliers, but who was equally distinguished among them by his good sound sense, observed: "These birds are certainly very remarkable, though not more so than the other works of nature, in which we see the hand of the Creator; but his wisdom and goodness are more striking when we see in them something extraordinary. Only think what a happy thing it is for these little birds that they can eat and run about as soon as they are hatched. If, like the swallow, it was necessary for their mother to feed them, she would never be able to do it where there are so many. How necessary it is, also, that they should have the

instinct to follow and obey her: without this they would be immediately dispersed, the hen could not gather them together, and half would be lost.

“Hens are commonly timid creatures, and I have been sometimes vexed to see the silly things fly off the minute I came near them; but, as soon as they become mothers, they are entirely changed. New instincts then give them new strength; and they even dare to contend with man. I have often smiled to see them disputing for a grain of millet; but, once become mothers, they lay aside their habitual greediness, seek nourishment for their little ones, call them, and touch nothing themselves until they are satisfied. The tenderness with which the hen guides her little family, feeding, protecting, and warning them, has been given her by God; and if He is so good to these little animals, should we ever despair? Have courage, then, my friends; He takes care of all his creatures, but man is dearer in his sight than all the birds in the world.”

As the people of the valley had always shown themselves very obliging to the strange lady, she had

been for some time considering how she might best render them some service in return. She had been careful of her eggs and hens, and, as soon as she had a good supply of eggs and some spare hens, she sent Martha to invite all the mothers to come and see her the next day; and they came, dressed in their best attire. Kuno had spread a table in the garden, and put benches around it for their seats.

Martha then brought in a large basket filled with white and spotless eggs. The good women were surprised at seeing such a quantity. "It is indeed a goodly sight," said the lady, "to see so many at a time; but I wish to teach you the use that may be made of them in housekeeping."

A fire had been lighted in a corner of the garden, and the lady had a vessel filled with water placed over it. Before she put the eggs in, she opened one to show the inside to her guests, and they all looked attentively at the crystal liquor in which a little yellow ball seemed floating. They then boiled as many eggs as there were guests. Salt to season them, and white bread, which she showed them how to use by breaking the shell and dipping the bread in, were

served. They found them delicious. "Here we have," they said, "not only the meat, but the dish too. How nice they look! What a pretty mixture of yellow and white! How quickly and easily an egg may be boiled! It would be impossible to find any cheaper or more nourishing food."

The lady then broke some eggs into melted butter, which made a new wonder for her guests. "How prettily the yellow is surrounded by the white," they said; "they look like the ox-eyes in our meadows." The eggs were then put on spinach, and this dish was not less praised than the other.

The lady had them cooked in many different ways, and showed the good women of the valley that eggs are not only excellent food in themselves, but that they may be used in preparing many other dishes.

The last thing offered was a fine dish of salad. The merry Kuno put some hard-boiled eggs in a plate to cool; to divert the guests, he let it fall suddenly, and all the eggs rolled out on the ground. At the noise the women turned round, and exclaimed aloud, for they expected to see the eggs all broken, and the inside lost; but what was their surprise to see the

lady pick them up, take off the shell, and cut them into slices! It was a fresh prodigy for them. The lady then told them how to cook the eggs hard and put them upon the salad: this new dish was particularly admired.

When the repast was finished, the lady distributed among the guests several fowls apiece, telling them that each hen would probably lay more than a hundred eggs a year. "A hundred eggs!" they repeated: "what riches for a housekeeper!"

The good women, on their return, spread pleasure throughout the valley. Everybody blessed the generous lady, and returned thanks to Heaven for so great a benefit. The fowls were a long time the subject of their conversations: every day they discovered some new, or singular, or useful properties in them. The crowing of the cocks in the morning was particularly pleasing to the fathers of the families. "They announce the day," they said, "and call man to his labour; the valley seems quite alive when they begin to crow, and every one goes to his work with a light heart."

"That is true," rejoined the miller; "but when

the cock crows for the first time towards midnight, it seems to say to revellers that it is high time to go home and go to sleep."

The good people often repeated, "These birds are designed evidently by Providence to live with men. They remain faithfully about the house, seldom go far off, and run at the first call. The poorest widow may afford to keep a few hens, and the eggs she receives every morning are a daily alms to her."

The children of the lady, also, saw what precious things those eggs were, which, while they lived in abundance, they looked upon with so much indifference, as well as many other things which they had once disdained; and they learned in poverty what they had too often neglected in prosperity, to "Praise the Lord for his goodness."

The bright days of summer passed away, and the winter appeared. It was very severe, particularly amid these mountains. The little huts of the valley remained for months almost buried beneath the snow, and hardly anything was visible to the eye at a dis-

tance, but their chimneys and part of the roof. The paths were all hidden—the mill could not grind—the cascades were mute and suspended from the rocks. The rigour of the season made everybody glad to remain by the fireside; and they could hardly resolve to leave the comforts within long enough to visit one another; so the colliers were very happy when they saw the snow melting, and the spring reappearing with all its charms.

The children of the valley might then be seen going in crowds to the unknown lady's cottage, to offer her little Edmond and Blande bouquets of violets and daisies; and when the fields were covered with flowers, they gathered the gayest and prettiest, of different colours, to make wreaths and crowns for them. The lady was touched with their attention, and resolved to do something that might give them pleasure in return. "At Easter," said she, "I will give them a little fête, for that should always be a time of rejoicing with them. I shall be, however, somewhat at a loss what to regale them with; if it were at Christmas, I could procure apples and nuts; but now the earth produces nothing, the trees are without fruits, and

eggs are the only things to be had at this season. They are the first gift of reviving nature."

"It is a pity, however," said Martha, "that the eggs are all of the same colour. The white is certainly very pretty, but the varied colours of the fruits are much more pleasing."

"Your remark gives me a good idea," replied the lady, after a moment's reflection. "I will boil some eggs, and colour them afterwards; the variety of the colours will, I am sure, please the little ones."

The lady was acquainted with many plants and roots used in dyeing. She stained the eggs with many beautiful colours—sky-blue, lemon colour, purple, and crimson; those which she had first enveloped in leaves were of the most delicate hues; some of them were enriched with mottoes.

Easter arrived; it was a bright spring day. The sun, as he rose above the horizon, shed a soft warmth throughout the valley; the heavens were pure and serene, and not a cloud veiled their azure surface. The fields were enamelled with flowers, everything breathed pleasure and invited to happiness; all nature seemed to be awakened to a new existence.

Before the sun had risen, the lady and old Kuno set out to go to the church, which was situated on the other side of the mountains, two leagues from their habitation. All the people of the valley, who were able to take such a long walk, followed the example of the pious stranger. The lady returned about mid-day, thanks to the care of her good old servant, who led her donkey by the bridle. As to the people of the valley, they did not get back until near night.

The lady had no sooner arrived at home, than all the little children of the valley about the age of Blande and Edmond, whom she had invited some time before, ran to meet her. She conducted them into the garden, where Kuno had covered a large rock with carpeting, and fixed a table upon it. The children seated themselves upon grassy mounds around it, with Edmond and Blande in the midst of them. They all looked happy and gay, and the impatience with which they awaited the promised fête, and their curiosity to know what was coming, might be read in their sparkling glances.

The lady then explained to them, in a clear and

touching manner, the reason why Easter-day was to be remembered and kept with such peculiar respect; and after she had finished her little discourse, old Kuno began to distribute refreshments, and commenced by bringing in a large bowl filled with custard. Each child was presented with a new porringer, and every one found their portion of the custard very nice.

Near the garden there was a little grove of fir trees, among which the grass grew luxuriantly. The lady carried the children there, and told them to take some moss from the rocks and trees about them, and to make little nests with it. They obeyed with so much pleasure and alacrity, that the nests were soon completed; they were then placed on the grass, and each child was desired to take particular notice of its own. They then returned to the garden, where they found the table surmounted by a large cake, iced as white as snow, and ornamented with flowers. While they were dividing and eating it, Martha slipped quietly into the grove with a basket of the coloured eggs, which she distributed among the nests; the blue, red, yellow, and speckled eggs, as-

sorting beautifully with the delicate green of the moss.

When the children had finished eating, the lady said, "Let us see now what has become of our little nests." What was their surprise when they returned to the grove! in each nest there were five eggs of the same colour, and a motto upon one of the five. The little ones were almost crazy with delight; they shouted and jumped about with joy.

"Red eggs! red eggs!" cried one. "O how beautiful!"

"Mine are blue," said another; "almost as blue as the sky!"

"Look at mine! do look at mine!" said another; "they are of a brighter yellow than the butterfly yonder."

"And mine too, of all colours!" cried a little boy. "How pretty the hens must be that laid these beautiful eggs: O how I should like to see one!"

"How little is necessary to afford amusement to these happy creatures," said the lady, touched at their innocent delight; "and who would not take pleasure in bestowing it? 'It is truly more blessed to give

than to receive.' One could almost wish to remain always at their age."

The children seemed to have nothing more to wish; but the good lady proposed a plan of heightening their enjoyment still more. Those who had yellow eggs would have perhaps preferred one red or blue; and so, likewise, would those who had all theirs of the same colours. The lady advised them to exchange with one another, all except those with mottoes, which she requested them to keep. This arrangement gave them additional satisfaction. "You see, my little friends," said she to them, "what a good thing it is to help one another. You will have many occasions during your lives to do what you are now doing. The Giver of all things distributes his blessings, that they may be communicated and enjoyed together, and that we should thus learn to love and help one another."

Little Edmond read the motto on his egg. The children were surprised at this, for there were very few schools in those days, and many grown people did not know how to read or write. One of the little girls wished to know what was written on hers. "It

is an excellent precept," said the lady. "Listen! 'It is God that nourisheth thee; return thanks for his goodness.'" She then asked the children if they always returned thanks for the blessings they received. The question reminded them that they had recently omitted doing so, and they immediately performed this pious duty.

They then asked to know what was written upon their eggs. They crowded around the lady, extending their little hands towards her, with those upon which the motto was written, exclaiming all at the same time, "Oh, tell me what is upon mine!" "Read mine first!" "Oh, no, do tell me mine!"

The lady imposed silence, and ranged them around her to read the mottoes in regular succession. They consisted of short moral precepts, and occasionally a few words of the Holy Scriptures; some of them were as follows:

"Flee from sin, for there is an eye from which nothing can be hidden."

"A grateful heart is elevated to heaven."

"Put thy trust in God, He will deliver thee in time of need."

"A good child will obey quickly."

"Modesty, dear children, is the most brilliant dress."

"No one will believe a liar, even though he should speak the truth."

"Hypocrisy is the poison of life."

"Earned bread whets the appetite."

"Avarice hardens the heart."

"The pious man will do all the good in his power."

"Anger, hatred, and envy, are the torments of life."

"Goodness, not gold, causes us to be beloved."

"A good conscience is a pillow of down."

"He who does good is always satisfied."

"Forget not that thou must die."

"The pleasures of the world are transient; the fruits of virtue remain."

The children busied themselves in learning their mottoes by heart, and they repeated them to themselves, that they might not forget them. The lady then asked if they knew them all. Some of the youngest found it difficult to repeat them, but with a little time and attention they were all soon learned. By helping them to the first word, they could easily

finish the sentence. They had never learned as much as at this time, in the midst of their play and amusement.

The sound of their merry voices extended far into the valley, and the parents and some of the children, who had not been able to go to the fête, ran to see what new wonder was in the lady's garden. They were surprised when they learned what had passed. "Our children," they said, "have learned more in half an hour here, than they would have learned at home in six months."

"Yes," said the miller; "but the great point is, to know what it is best to teach: the lady knows so well how to manage these little ones. Only see! here is a complete assortment of precepts and instruction for youth."

The lady divided among the new-comers all the coloured eggs that were left, and the remainder of the cake. "You can eat them when you return home," said she; "only be careful to preserve, as a token of remembrance, those which are accompanied with a motto."

"Oh, we shall take care not to touch those," replied

the children; "for the motto is worth more than the egg."

"Yes," said the lady, "provided you do as it tells you."

The lady then recommended to the parents to recall these mottoes to their children whenever the occasion presented itself, and they were not slow in following her advice. If one of the little ones was tardy in obeying their commands, the father had only to say, raising his finger, "*A good child*," and the little one would add, "*will obey quickly*;" at the same time hastening to do what had been ordered. Nothing was so much dreaded as the application of the motto condemning them "not to be believed even when they spoke the truth;" and the very idea of the fate of the liar made them endeavour to avoid his lot. Their parents, in like manner, applied the precepts contained in the other mottoes.

The children could talk of nothing but the delightful day they had passed. "Well," said the lady, "you must be diligent and good, and every year you shall spend just such another; but remember, no bad

children will be invited ; our fête is only for the good ones."

Among the spectators of this little fête, the lady had remarked a young man who appeared to take no share in the general joy. He appeared about sixteen years old, and was very poorly clad ; but his agreeable countenance and modest deportment, his healthful bloom, and bright yet tearful eyes, were calculated to interest an observer in his favour. His long, fair hair floated over his shoulders, and in his hand he carried a walking-staff.

When the crowd had retired, the lady, touched with compassion, approached him and asked him the cause of his affliction. "Alas," replied the youth, "my father, who was a stone-mason, died only three weeks ago. This affliction has reduced his family to poverty and distress. I have a brother and sister younger than myself ; our poor mother has not now the means of supporting us, and one of her brothers has promised to let me live with him to learn my father's trade, that I may be able to earn a livelihood, and aid my poor mother. I am now on my way to

his house. I have come twenty leagues, and I have as many more to go, for my uncle lives very far off, quite the other side of the mountains."

The lady, who found some resemblance in the situation of the poor widow to her own, could not refrain from shedding tears at the recital of the young man. She gave him part of her humble store, refreshed him with eggs, milk, and cakes, and offered him a few pieces of silver for his mother. Edmond and Blande were equally attentive.

"Take this pretty red egg," said Blande, "and give it to your little sister, with a kiss from me."

"And mine, too," said Edmond. "Carry this to your brother, and tell him he must come to see us."

The lady herself added to these simple presents. She took an egg, and smiling as she gave it to him, said, "Give this to thy mother from me; the precept upon it is the best consolation I can offer her: 'Put thy trust in God, He will deliver thee in time of need.' If she will consider this truth with attention, and make it the rule of her conduct, I shall have made her the most useful of all presents."

The young man thanked her for her kindness, and

then accepted the invitation of the good miller to pass the night at his house. The next morning, as soon as the rocks in the upper part of the valley were tinged with the first rays of the sun, he continued his route, well provided with oaten bread and goats' milk cheese, which the generous miller had taken care to put into his wallet. Fridolin (for this was the young man's name) pursued his way across the rocks, the valleys, and the mountains, and walked so steadily, that towards the decline of the third day he was only a few leagues from his uncle's dwelling. As he was climbing up a steep rock, happening to cast his eyes below, he suddenly perceived, at the bottom of a frightful precipice, a horse covered with fine red housings, and whose bridle glittered as if enriched with gold. The animal raised his head towards him, and neighed, as if to express his pleasure at seeing him, as well as to call for help.

"How is it possible," exclaimed the young man, "that this fine animal has found his way into that frightful abyss! I must absolutely go and see what is the meaning of this strange matter."

Fridolin at last found a narrow path hollowed out

between the rocks by a torrent, which at that time happened to be dry, and descended without meeting with any accident. When he reached the bottom, he discovered a man lying near a large rock. His appearance indicated a person of rank, and his dress was that of a knight. His lance, and his helmet, ornamented with a tuft of brilliantly coloured feathers, lay by his side. On seeing his excessive paleness, Fridolin doubted at first whether he was not dead, though he hoped he might be, perhaps, only sleeping. He went to him, and, with feelings of the greatest compassion, gently took hold of his hand. "My dear sir," said he, in a voice which betrayed his emotion, "what is the matter? are you ill?"

At these words the stranger opened his eyes feebly, and fixed them upon the young man. He attempted to speak, but could not. He touched his lips with his hand, and pointed to his helmet. Fridolin understood him to ask for water; and immediately taking the helmet, ran to look for a spring. Hurrying towards some old willows, across the rocks and bushes, he soon found a clear spring bubbling from a rock covered with moss. There, he filled the helmet, and

hastened back to the stranger, who drank eagerly, at intervals, and by degrees recovered his speech.

“God be praised!” were his first words. Then leaning his head on his hand, he said in a feeble voice, “I thank thee, excellent young man! God hath guided thee hither, to snatch me from a miserable death. But I am dying of hunger! hast thou nothing to eat?”

“Alas, no!” said Fridolin. “Oh, if I had only known it sooner! I had some bread and cheese in my wallet, but, unlucky creature that I am, I have eaten every morsel. Yet, wait awhile,” cried he, joyously, “I have something; I can give you some eggs; they make a wholesome and strengthening nourishment; they will, I am sure, do you good.” He then seated himself by the stranger, took out the eggs, stripped off the shell of one, and cutting it in slices, offered it to the sick man, who ate and drank by turns. Fridolin was about to crack the third egg, but the stranger stopped him.

“I have had enough, thanks to thee, my good friend,” said he. “It will not do to eat too much at a time, after my long fast. Thank Heaven, I am

stronger already. But for thee, this night would have been the last of my life!"

"Noble knight," said Fridolin, examining more nearly his brilliant cuirass and splendid dress, "how did you and your steed get into this horrid place?"

"I am one of the attendants of a man of high rank," replied the stranger, "and I have been travelling for several weeks in executing his orders. I got lost among these mountains, night surprised me, and in the dark, my horse fell with me down this precipice. He fell on his feet and remained unhurt, but I received so severe a wound in the foot that I could neither walk nor even mount my horse. I staunched the wound as well as I could, but a burning fever soon seized me, and I expected nothing else but to die of hunger in the midst of these rocks, when thou wast sent like an angel from heaven to recall me to life. Tell me now, in thy turn, excellent young man, who conducted thee to this frightful desert?"

Fridolin then related his history to the stranger, who was extremely attentive to the recital, and often interrupted him by questions. The kind lady in the valley, and the eggs by which the stranger's life

had been so providentially preserved, were not forgotten.

“How pretty those blue and red shells look upon the grass,” said the stranger. “They are very singular and beautiful: do show me again the one that has not been broken; I should like to examine it more nearly.”

Fridolin presented it to him, and showed him the motto written upon it. The stranger looked at it with attention, and his eyes filled with tears. “How true, indeed,” said he, “are these words which I see here: ‘*Put thy trust in God, He will deliver thee in time of need.*’ I have this moment been a witness of this touching truth. From the bottom of this abyss I implored his help, and He hath heard me! Praised be his holy name! I trust his blessing will rest upon the dear children who gave those eggs to thee, and the kind lady who inscribed this motto. Give me this egg, that I may preserve it, in memory of the truth it has manifested in so efficacious a manner. Perhaps, a hundred years hence, some of my descendants may recount to their children the wonderful manner in which one of their ancestors was saved

from death by a couple of eggs. Give me the one that remains; I will give thee something else in return."

At these words he took out his purse, gave to Fridolin a piece of gold for each of the eggs he had eaten, and two for the one upon which the motto was written. The young man was unwilling to part with his egg, but he could not resist the entreaties of the wounded stranger.

"Let us now," said he, "endeavour to get out of this place; the day is wearing away, and the rocks are gleaming in the light of the declining sun. Help me to mount my horse, and we will try to find our way back by the path which guided thee hither."

Fridolin assisted him to mount, and led his horse by the bridle. After a great deal of trouble, they at last got safely out of the ravine, and found themselves at the top of the precipice. It would be impossible to express the joy and gratitude of the unfortunate stranger, when he once more saw the forests and mountains brightly illuminated by the setting sun.

"We shall still have time to reach my uncle's

house," said Fridolin. "I am a sturdy walker, and your horse seems not unwilling to follow me. You will be heartily welcomed."

They reached the house of the honest stone-mason just at nightfall. He received the stranger with kindness; and, clapping his young kinsman on the shoulder, congratulated him on having behaved so well in the circumstances in which he had been placed. Fridolin, however, could not help regretting that he was unable to obey the injunction of the kind lady and her children, by sending their present to his mother.

"What tale is this about red and blue eggs, and all sorts of eggs, that you have been dinging in my ears this half hour?" said his uncle. "How should these be of so much more value than any other sort? They could not have been used in a better cause. You have saved a man from dying of hunger, and conducted yourself like a fine fellow. You have done the part of the good Samaritan, let me alone for the rest. You will not be obliged to pay me anything, either," said he, smiling, "as the Samaritan paid for having his wounded man taken care of."

The stranger then, at his request, showed him the remaining one of the wonderful eggs, which had so much excited his curiosity. "It is really very pretty," said he to his nephew; "but do not regret the loss of it, for this gold will afford thy mother much more pleasure. Let me change it, for she would be embarrassed by having it in its present form."

The young man, not knowing the value of the gold, was astonished at the quantity of change he received for it.

"Thy mother," said his uncle, "may also testify to the truth of the words, 'God will deliver thee in time of need.' They are more precious than all the gold in the world, but they should be remembered without having need of an egg to recall them to thy mind. I hope thou wilt never forget them, my son."

The stranger remained with the stone-mason until he had entirely recovered, and at his departure generously rewarded him and all the people of his household.

Nothing worthy of remark occurred in the valley during the summer. Everything went on as usual,

except that the children very often inquired, "How long it would be before Easter would come again?"

But the noble lady had many sorrows to contend with. Her old and faithful servant, who took care of all her affairs, and went on all her errands, fell sick, and was no longer able to leave the valley. His strength gradually failing, he became unable to quit the house; and, when the yellow leaves began to show the approach of autumn, he could hardly sit up long enough to enjoy the sunshine at the door. The good lady shed many silent tears over the sufferings of the poor old man, in whose loss she anticipated that of her last support. She was also much afflicted in being deprived of any news of her home and country, in this lonely valley.

This was not all; she had yet greater trials in reserve. The colliers, returning one day from the forest, told her that the preceding night, while sitting quietly around their kilns, they were accosted by four strangers in complete armour, with their breastplates, helmets, swords, and lances. They had said they were the vassals of the Count Schroffeneck, who had just arrived among the mountains, with a number of knights.

They added, that these men had been busily engaged in informing themselves of everything that passed in that part of the country. The miller hastened to communicate this news to the lady, whom he found sitting by the bedside of the good old Kuno.

At the name of Schroffeneck the lady turned pale. "It is I," she exclaimed; "it is I, of whom he is in search. He is my most cruel enemy. O, if the colliers should have told these strangers my retreat!"

The miller endeavoured to tranquillize her, assuring her that, as he had been informed, they had not asked any questions about her;—that these armed men had only approached the fire to warm themselves, and as soon as daylight appeared they had departed. Yet he could not deny, that they had since been seen prowling about among the mountains.

"My kind friend," said the lady, addressing herself to the miller, "the hospitality you have extended to me and mine, encourages me to confide to you my misfortunes, and the cause of the terror which at present overwhelms me. I do it with perfect confidence; and I am sure you will not refuse me your assistance and advice."

“I am Rosalinde, the daughter of the Duke of Burgundy. Two distinguished counts, Hannon de Schrofeneck and Arno de Lindembourg, contended for the honour of my hand in marriage. Hannon was a very rich and powerful lord; he had many castles, and troops of soldiers were in his pay; but his character was bad, his sentiments low and vicious. Arno was one of the noblest and most valiant knights in all the country; but he was poor in comparison with Hannon. He had inherited only a single castle, and that almost in ruins; and he was too high-minded to entertain a thought of enriching himself by violence. My heart preferred Arno; my father approved my choice, and he bestowed on us, at our marriage, a large domain and several superb castles. We lived in the most perfect harmony, and each day added to our happiness.

“But Hannon, foiled in his wishes, had vowed eternal and implacable hatred to my husband, and to me. Prudence, however, prevented him from declaring open war against us, and he concealed his resentment.

“It happened that my husband was compelled to

follow the Emperor in his wars against the Turks. Hannon was also ordered to accompany them, but, under different pretexts, he prolonged his preparations, and suffered them to depart, promising to join the army very soon. Whilst my husband fought upon the frontiers for his country, and covered himself with glory in repulsing her numerous enemies, the traitor Hannon came down like a desolating whirlwind upon our territory, devastating all the environs, and taking possession of all our castles. I was then obliged to escape secretly with my two children, and my good old Kuno. He conducted me to these mountains, among which I have found a retreat.

“I wished and expected to remain here, until my husband would return and snatch our possessions from their unjust ravisher. Kuno occasionally went into the plains, to learn the news of the war; but, up to the time of his last visit, his intelligence has been of the most afflicting sort. Hannon continued to enjoy the fruits of his usurpation, and the war on the frontiers continued with variable success. It is now nearly a year since my poor Kuno has been ill, and during that time I have had no news either of my

country or my dear husband. Ah, who can tell whether he has not fallen beneath the steel of the enemy! And then this dreadful Hannon so near us! What will become of me, what will become of my dear children? Death is the least evil that I expect at his hands! Speak to the colliers, my excellent friend, and implore them not to betray me."

"Betray you!" said the miller; "I will answer for them all; they will give their lives for you. Before Schroffeneck shall offer you the slightest insult, he will have to reach you through our hearts. Be not uneasy, then, noble lady."

This was the unanimous language of all the colliers, when the miller had informed them of the circumstances. "Let him come," cried they; "let him come on; we will soon show him the way back again with our shovels!"

The lady was nevertheless extremely anxious and unhappy; she dared not go out herself, nor permit her children to do so. She passed many days and nights in a state of continual alarm. When, at last, calm was re-established among the mountains, and the armed men were no longer to be seen, she resolved

one day upon taking a little walk. It was a bright day in autumn, after several weeks of rain and bad weather.

A few hundred yards from the cottage, there was a sort of rustic chapel, built of fir trees, and without a door. It was built against a high rock, and some fine fir trees shaded the entrance. There was something very silent and solemn about this little spot. The path that led to it was bordered by bushes and picturesque shrubs. She now bent her steps in that direction, and not without a swelling heart did she find herself in this loved spot once more. She knelt, with her children, upon a grassy mound at the entrance of the chapel, and remained some time engaged in prayer. She then rose, and seated herself on the mound, while the children amused themselves in gathering wild berries among the rocks, and by degrees strayed off to a considerable distance. While she was thus alone, absorbed in sorrowful reflections, a pilgrim came out from the rocks, and advanced toward the chapel. He wore, as was the custom of the pilgrims, a long black garment, and a short cloak above it; his hat was decorated with sea-shells, and

in his hand he held a long white staff. He appeared very old, but his bearing denoted the highest rank ; his mien was lofty and noble, and his step bold and firm. His hair, which fell dishevelled on his shoulders, as well as his long beard, were white as snow ; but his cheeks glowed with all the freshness of youth.

The lady was seized with sudden terror at the sight of the stranger. He saluted her respectfully, and entered into conversation with her. She was, however, very reserved for some time, and looked at him timidly, as if doubting whether she might venture to trust him.

“Noble lady,” said the pilgrim, “do not, I pray you, do me the injustice to suspect me. You are no stranger to me ; I know you better than you think : you are Rosalinde of Burgundy. I am aware of the terrible circumstances which have constrained you to seek an asylum amid these arid rocks. Your husband, also, from whom you have been separated for three years, is perfectly well known to me. Since your flight, many things have happened. If Arno de Lindenbourg still retains his place in your heart—if you desire to hear from him, I can give you excellent

news. Peace is concluded, and the Christian army has returned home crowned with laurels. Your husband has recovered his possessions from the odious Hannon, your persecutor, and has obliged him to fly. He at first sought refuge among these mountains, but he has been forced to abandon his retreat, and to retire to a distant country. Your husband has now but one wish, that of finding you, his tender and beloved wife."

"What! will my dear Arno then be restored to me!" exclaimed the lady, in a transport of joy. "Father of mercies!" she continued, falling on her knees, while the tears fell fast from her eyes, "thou hast heard the voice of my complaint, thou hast seen my tears, thou hast not rejected my supplication! Oh Arno, Arno," said she, "why am I not near thee—why may I not now put our children in thy arms? They were too young, when thou wert taken from us, to call upon thee; oh hasten to hear, for the first time from their own lips, the sweet name of father! Ah," continued she, turning toward the pilgrim, "thou wouldst then know if I still think of my husband; if he is still dear to my heart? Run here, run quickly, dear children,"

said she to the little ones, who remained timidly at a distance, looking with curiosity at the stranger. At their mother's call they ran to her.

“Edmond,” said she, giving him an encouraging kiss to conquer his timidity, “recite the little prayer that we say every morning for papa.”

Edmond clasped his little hands with fervour, and with a softened voice and upraised eyes said, “Oh our heavenly Parent, have pity upon two little orphans; our father is gone to the war, preserve his precious life; teach us to be good and pious, that he may love us when he comes back again. Hear us, for thy dear Son's sake.”

“And thou also, Blande,” said her mother, addressing herself to the little girl, with her rosy cheeks and fair curling hair, “what is the prayer we say every evening before we go to bed?”

The lovely child clasped her hands as her little brother had done, raised her blue eyes, and said in a soft and timid voice, “Oh heavenly Father, before we go to our rest, we would again pray to thee for the earthly father thou hast given us; grant him a peaceful night, and may good angels guard him. Grant

sweet sleep, also, to our dear mother, that she may for a time forget her sorrows; but if she cannot rest, extend this blessing to our dear father. May the time speedily come, when he will be restored to us. Hear and answer our prayer, for our blessed Saviour's sake."

"Amen! amen!" said the mother, clasping her hands, and raising her eyes, bathed in tears, to heaven.

The pilgrim could no longer restrain his emotion; he sobbed aloud. In an instant he threw aside his white hair and flowing beard, as well as his pilgrim gown and cloak, and appeared as he was, a youthful warrior, glittering in gold and purple, bright with health and joy. Extending his arms towards his wife and children, he cried from the bottom of his full heart, "Oh Rosalinde, my wife! Oh Edmond! Blande! my dear, dear children!"

Rosalinde was mute and motionless with surprise and delight. The children, who, on seeing the great emotion of the stranger, had looked towards their mother as if to ask her help for him, turned again towards him when he had pronounced their names. They were altogether astonished at the sudden meta-

morphosis of the pilgrim. Recalling to mind some wonderful legends they had heard, they imagined that the old man was suddenly transformed to an angel, so splendid did he appear to them. In reality, he was the handsomest knight in all the Christian army. What was not their joy when they learned that this was the beloved father, of whom they had so often heard! The delighted family felt almost as if they were already united in heaven. Several hours passed off as if they had been minutes.

Rosalinde learned from her husband that he had just arrived with a numerous escort, in search of her; that he had left his retinue behind, on account of the difficulties presented by the roads; that to see her sooner, he had come on foot, and had disguised himself as a pilgrim, that he might himself prepare her for his return. Rosalinde asked him how he had contrived to discover her retreat so soon.

“Oh my Rosalinde,” he replied, “our meeting is the fruit of thy beneficence to the poor, and above all, toward the children of this valley. It is to reward thee for that, that heaven has given back to thy children the father for whom their prayers ascended.

But for thy generous sentiments, we should not yet have been restored to each other—perhaps we might never have met; for thou wast surrounded by enemies, and might, at any instant, have fallen into their power. Hannon was in pursuit of thee with his troop, and only quitted these mountains when he heard of my arrival. “Here,” said he, showing her the egg with the words written upon it, “‘Put thy trust in God, he will deliver thee in time of need,’ is what has been, under Providence, the cause of our meeting. I have, for a long time, sent in every direction to seek for thee, but in vain. One day, our excellent Edgar returned, after a long absence. He had been gone so long, that I despaired of ever seeing him again. He had fallen from a precipice, and was dying of hunger, when a young man found him in this dreadful condition, appeased his hunger with a couple of eggs, and gave him this in remembrance of his happy deliverance. Edgar showed me the egg on his return; but what was my surprise when I recognised thy hand in the writing upon it! We immediately mounted our horses, and went full speed to the marble quarry where the young man was at work, and he guided

me hither. If thy benevolent disposition had not inspired the idea of giving the little fête to the children with the Easter eggs—if thou hadst not thought of uniting instruction with their pleasure, by means of the excellent precepts inscribed upon the eggs—and if thou, dear Edmond, and thou, my sweet Blande, had been less charitable to a poor young stranger, this happy day might perhaps have never shone upon us. Thus, the least good action draws upon us the benediction of Heaven, when it is done from a pure and disinterested motive. Charity has its recompense, even in this world, and ‘the merciful shall obtain mercy.’ Repose with confidence upon divine Providence, think of the eternal truth inscribed upon this egg, and you need never dread being forsaken ‘in time of need.’ ”

The evening was fast closing in, and a few stars already began to twinkle in the heavens. The Count returned with his wife to her humble habitation, and the children ran before them. A new pleasure awaited them there. They found Edgar and Fridolin, who had hastened to inform old Kuno of his beloved master’s return. This news had almost restored

the good old man to health. Fridolin was the first to run and gaily salute the Countess and her children as old acquaintances. After him came Edgar, who, after saluting the Countess respectfully, said, "Permit me, noble lady, to kiss the beneficent hand which, under Providence, has saved my life." The Count embraced his faithful old Kuno, and heartily shook hands with the good miller.

The next day was one of rejoicing throughout the valley. The news that a great lord had just come, and that he was the husband of the good lady, put everything in motion. Everybody, old and young, ran to see, and the cottage could not contain all the people assembled on this happy occasion. The Count saluted these good people with the greatest kindness, and thanked them for all they had done for his wife and children. "We have done nothing for her," said they, "it is she who has been so good to us."

During the time that all this was passing at the cottage, some of the colliers had guided the Count's escort to the valley. The sound of the trumpet was soon heard, and a crowd of knights and attendants,

on horseback and on foot, appeared between two mountains covered with forests, their polished helmets and brilliant armour sparkling in the rays of the sun. They saluted the Countess with transports of joy, and their enthusiastic shouts rent the air.

The Count remained several days in the valley. The day before that fixed for his departure with his wife and children, Kuno, and his escort, he gave a great dinner to all the inhabitants of the valley. The miller, the colliers, the Count, his wife and children, were all seated at the same table. After the repast was finished, the Count made rich presents to all his guests, and especially to the miller, and the father of the little girl Martha, who remained in the Count's family. Fridolin and his poor mother, with her family, were not forgotten, and a comfortable subsistence for life was assured to them. The Count then addressing himself to the children, said, "I intend, my little friends, to place a fund in trust for your benefit, as a testimony of my gratitude to your good parents; and I beg that every year at the festival of Easter, the coloured eggs, which were a source

of so much pleasure to you, may always be distributed."

"And in memory of my present happiness," said the Countess, "I shall do the same at our castle, and the little ones there shall always, on that occasion, receive a similar present."

This was done accordingly; the custom by degrees gained ground, and, at this day, the *Easter Eggs* have become celebrated in more countries than one.

"Didn't I tell you," cried Charlie, when the reading was finished, "that Uncle Thomas was the best hand in the world to tell a story! See now what he has hatched out of an Easter Egg!"

The little strangers screamed, and clapped their hands at his wit, and in five minutes they were dashing away homeward, to the jingle of the merry sleigh-bells, leaving the members of the reading society to retire to bed.



THE FIFTH NIGHT.

WHEN our little company assembled, this evening, Charlie claimed his turn, in selecting a picture to furnish a cue for the story of the night.

“Oh, here is a fine little fellow, on a pony, with two dogs,” he exclaimed; “what are they doing? How they do go!”

“They are rabbit-hunting, I presume, Charlie,” was the answer.

“Well, Uncle, for all you read to us about the cruelty of hunting, the other evening, I *should* like to ride on a little pony, and go rabbit-hunting. Besides, I am so fond of dogs! Could you not bring me a nice little dog, the next time you come? Mary has told us lots of stories about Mr. Thompson’s dog Dash. They say he had as much sense as a man!”

“More, perhaps, than some men I have known,” replied Uncle Thomas; “but you are touching on a

tender subject, Charles. I loved Dash, almost as much as I could love a child; but the dog-catchers caught him, last summer, and poor Dash was cruelly murdered! He has figured pretty largely in the Christmas Blossoms for the last three years, and if you are fond of hearing stories about him, you must persuade your father to bring you to the city; then you can read his history in Mr. Thompson's library. Suppose you come, and bring Annie with you?"

"I don't like to live in the city," said Charlie, pouting; "I was there last year, and I could not sleep for the noise. Why cannot Mr. Thompson bring them here, and the books too? I am sure the country is much pleasanter than the town!"

"His business, I fear, would not permit."

"I hate people in business; they are so dull."

"Business has its uses though; and if you please, I will read you a story about a dog and a man of business that I think will please you all."

So, the little folks seated themselves, and Uncle Thomas began.

“LOVE ME, LOVE MY DOG.”

“LOVE me, love my dog,” said little Marianne Greyburn one day as she drew her old favourite within her arms; and when the first pleasure of her caress was over, she pressed him still more closely, with a somewhat altered look, repeating often the same familiar saying in a peculiar tone of voice, which implied that she was not altogether satisfied with something which had just transpired.

“Never mind,” she added, patting the quiet animal upon the head, and stroking down its shining hair, “Never mind, if they do treat you badly, Nero, they would treat me in the same manner if they dared; and though the steps are just washed, and you are forbidden to go in, we can sit more happily beneath this tree than we could in the Queen’s palace. So never mind, old fellow, we will love one another all

the better because nobody else cares anything about us."

Now Marianne's dog Nero, though a very faithful and affectionate creature, was particularly fond of walking in and out of Mrs. Greyburn's handsome hall; and it so happened on that day, that he had received a somewhat severe reprimand from the servant, whose business it was to keep the hall clean, seconded by Mrs. Greyburn herself, who had called him a troublesome old creature, and even threatened to have him sent away. But, worst of all, Mr. Greyburn having come in while the various charges were being made against the dog, he had taken his whip from its usual place, and as the terrified animal scampered away, had applied it, as Marianne verily believed, to the legs of her poor favourite. From such an accumulation of sufferings and wrongs, she had consequently escaped with her friend, to bemoan his distress, and to ponder upon the words of the old adage, "Love me, love my dog;" words which she very tenderly applied to her own case, believing herself to be a person deeply aggrieved.

These trying circumstances decided Marianne Grey-

burn upon writing immediately to her married sister, at whose house she was about to visit, to request that her dog Nero might be the companion of her journey; and she added to this request a hope that for her sake he might be received and treated kindly by the family.

Some young people would have thought such a request rather an impertinent one to make, seeing that Marianne was not much acquainted with her sister's husband; but the young lady in question was a little too much accustomed to think herself and her own affairs of more importance than anything else, and therefore she sent off her letter without showing it either to her father or her mother.

The answer that Marianne received was more favourable than might have been expected. Selina, for that was her sister's name, was not fond of pet dogs, and Mr. Wentworth, her husband, had a decided objection to them; but they had both taken into account the probability that Marianne might be dull at their house, where she could have no young companions, and they therefore cordially agreed to comply with her request, and even sent an express

invitation for old Nero, promising that he should be treated with all possible respect.

"I begin," said Marianne to her mother, as she was packing up her trunk, "to think I shall like Mr. Wentworth, after all, at least better than I ever did before. It is really kind of him to ask my dog, as well as me, and flattering too."

"I am afraid you think as much of the flattery as of the kindness," observed Mrs. Greyburn, "Had I been in your place, I should hardly have taken him, notwithstanding the invitation, for you must be aware it is only given to please you."

"And what can be so agreeable as to find people will put themselves out of the way to please you?" asked Marianne.

"Nothing," replied her mother. "But the question of importance in such cases is, whether we will take advantage of such kindness, by inflicting upon our friends what must be an annoyance. However, I will consent in this instance to let you do as you like, because I want you to know from your own experience how kind and excellent a man Mr. Wentworth really is."

"I dare say he may be both kind and excellent," replied Marianne, in a sort of under tone, "but I don't expect to be able to like him very much, for all that."

The fact was, Selina Greyburn had ventured to choose a husband for herself, while her younger sister was at school; and what was a still greater offence, the excellent gentleman to whom she was now married, had always treated Marianne as if she were a girl, rather than a woman. Nay, he had even gone so far, and forgotten himself so entirely, as, on one memorable occasion, to take hold of her hand, instead of offering her his arm;—an insult to her dignity which she did not find it easy to forgive.

The nearest approach she had ever made towards forgiveness, was on the occasion of her dog being invited; and she therefore set out in high good humour, accompanied by her father's coachman, for the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Wentworth, which, unfortunately for Nero, happened to be in the centre of a large town.

It is scarcely necessary to say, that, by a brother-in-law so kind and good, Marianne was received with

the warmest welcome ; and though the day was rainy, and Nero had walked a considerable distance along the streets ; though his long hair was dripping with mud ; and though he entered in this plight the beautiful hall of Mr. Wentworth's house ; he was kindly spoken to by the gentleman himself, and even patted on the head, as he rushed past him to follow his mistress up the wide stairs, and over the rich carpets, which, like all the furniture of the house, appeared to be costly, elegant, and new.

“What shall I ever do with him?” said Marianne, drawing back, really appalled at the aspect of the drawing-room, when contrasted with the condition of her dog.

“With whom?” asked Selina. “Have you brought any one with you?”

“Only old Nero,” replied Marianne.

“Oh ! you have really brought him !” exclaimed her sister. “To tell the truth, I thought you were joking all the time ;—and so dirty, too ! What shall we ever do with him, indeed ? Wentworth is so particular. Dear Marianne, I do wish you had left him at home.”

“Love me, love my dog!” exclaimed Marianne : “I came to try you, and I see my experiment has failed. But without joking, Selina, I *am* sorry he should come up stairs in this dirty plight; and if you will allow me, I will send him down with one of the servants.”

“I hardly dare trust him,” replied Selina; “for though *we* may love you well enough to bear with him *for your sake*, my servants cannot be expected to do the same, and a sorry life he would have of it amongst them.”

Poor Marianne! she was now very seriously distressed; and instead of rejoicing in the invitation given to her dog, began almost to wish that her relations had not loved her, rather than that they should have shown it in such a manner. Mr. Wentworth, however, relieved her from the suffering she was enduring, by telling her very candidly, that he had provided a lodging for her dog, where he would be treated with every kindness, where she might see him as often as she wished, and from whence she might take him to accompany her in her walks; “for,” he added, very seriously, “you must see that,

in such a house as this, with every disposition to make both you and your friend happy, it would be quite impossible to accommodate him."

"I am quite sure I shall never like Mr. Wentworth," said Marianne to herself that night, when she went to bed; and when she awoke in the morning, her first thought was again—"I am quite sure I shall never like him." She thought, too, that as the day was fine, Nero might have been admitted into the house; but there was no mention of him, and it is very probable that Mr. Wentworth went out to his business, without once remembering that there was such a being in existence.

"I like him less and less," said Marianne to herself, after he was gone; and she strengthened herself in this impression as much as she could, by recollecting all he had said and done, which she could in any way find fault with, during the short interval of their early meal. For one thing, and that was a very grave charge, Mr. Wentworth had read the newspaper, and one long column on education he had actually read aloud, during breakfast. For another, he had worn a pair of shabby slippers; and for a third, he had paid

no attention to what she was talking about with Selina, but had actually broken the thread of their conversation, by some observations upon the price of cattle in Smithfield market.

It was in vain that Mr. Wentworth endeavoured to overcome the prejudices of his young relative, by all the kindness he was accustomed to exercise towards those around him. Marianne had seen very little of the world, and had no means of judging of such a character as that of her brother-in-law. Yet, like too many young and inexperienced people, she thought herself quite justified in disliking him, because he did not please her taste. Thus, her behaviour to him was not always respectful, and at times scarcely obliging. When he asked her to walk with him, she had either a headache or was tired; when he read aloud to her, it was not the book she wished to hear; when he drew his chair to the fire, in order to enjoy the pleasure of a social hour at the close of the day, she became silent, or conversed with others, in an under tone, on subjects in which he could not possibly feel an interest.

Although, as an insignificant person, Marianne

might do all this without committing any flagrant breach of good manners, yet there is a manner which so clearly implies an absence of interest and kind feeling, that it is in reality more offensive than absolute rudeness; and young people, who dare not be directly rude, will sometimes put on this manner towards persons whom they would really admire, if they could but understand or know them better.

“I am afraid,” said Selina to her sister, one day, as they sat together at their work, “that you do not like my husband!”

“What makes you think so?” said Marianne, blushing deeply.

“Your behaviour implies it,” replied her sister.

“To be perfectly frank with you,” said Marianne, “I am afraid I do not.”

“Have you ever tried to like him?” asked Selina.

“What can you mean?” said Marianne, looking up with astonishment. “Liking comes of itself, or not at all.”

“I beg your pardon,” said Selina. “We cannot absolutely *make* liking, but we can *cultivate* it; and there are sometimes strong reasons why we should

endeavour to like those who are not personally agreeable to us."

"Yes," replied Marianne, "I am perfectly aware there are. In my own case, for instance, it would be greatly to my advantage if I could like Mr. Wentworth."

"I did not mean that exactly," replied her sister. "Perhaps you will understand me better, if I repeat the old adage, 'Love me, love my dog.'"

"An excellent old saying!" exclaimed Marianne, "and I wish all people would remember it as well as I do."

"I was going to tell you how you might remember it better," observed Selina.

"What do you mean?" asked Marianne, for she had not once suspected that the old adage could be applied to her disadvantage.

"I mean," replied her sister, "that I should have thought your love for me would have induced you, at least *to try* to like the best and the kindest friend I have in the world. I should have thought that your love for me would have induced you to suppose, that I could not have chosen such a friend as my compa-

nion for life, without he had possessed merits of which you might not perhaps be aware; but, above all, I should have thought that your love for me would have been a sufficient reason, for your treating my husband with every mark of respect; and, even if you could not love him yourself, I should have thought you would have spared me the pain of feeling that you disliked him."

Marianne hung down her head with every appearance of shame and humiliation, as her sister spoke these words. She was, however, of a frank and candid disposition, and she therefore confessed that she had been wrong in her behaviour; but again added, that her feelings were not at her own command, and that she could not consequently promise to like her brother better.

"What is it you find fault with in him?" asked Selina, who very naturally wondered that one, whom she admired so much, had not found favour in her sister's eyes.

"I really can hardly say," replied Marianne; "but I think the chief thing is, he is such a man of busi-

ness : I never did like mere men of business, and I never shall."

"Dear Marianne," said Selina very gravely, "you should be quite sure that you understand what you are talking about, before you pronounce on any one in this manner. You compel me to speak of family matters, in order to vindicate my husband, and to show you the folly of judging hastily of characters which you have no means of understanding."

"You must not mistake me, Selina," said Marianne, interrupting her sister, "nor suppose that I am unwilling to believe Mr. Wentworth an excellent man. I give him credit for a thousand good qualities, but still I must say, that a man whose whole soul is in business, who goes early in the morning to his counting-house, and comes home late, too tired to be agreeable, who never spends a day of pleasure, nor gives his thoughts to anything but pounds, shillings, and pence, is, and must be to me, the kind of a man who can neither excite interest nor affection."

"Marianne !" exclaimed Selina, "you do not know what you say. When I married Mr. Wentworth, he

was what the world calls a rich man, and only waited for a suitable opportunity for disposing of his business, before we should retire into the country to enjoy that life of leisure which, notwithstanding your low opinion of him, he is well calculated to enjoy. Two years ago, my father fell into pecuniary difficulties, with which you were too young to be made acquainted. But for the noble generosity of Mr. Wentworth, he must have been made a bankrupt; but this brother, whom you so little understand, with a nobility of heart too seldom met with, determined, from that time, to continue, and even to extend his arduous but lucrative business; and he now works on as you see, from morning till night, never, as you complain, allowing himself a day of pleasure, in order that my father may retain his position in society, and that he, my mother, and you, may suffer no diminution of your accustomed enjoyments."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Marianne, for she was at once astonished and shocked at her own injustice. "Is it possible that, while I was thinking so hardly of Mr. Wentworth, I was actually living upon the fruits of his labour?"

“It is as I have told you,” replied Selina, “and I have made you acquainted with the true state of the case, in order that you may take warning for the future, and learn not to think and speak of persons whom you do not know, merely from the caprice of the moment; that you may learn, too, to take in some measure upon trust, those whom your friends have found, after long acquaintance, to be worthy of their regard; and that, even before you can love them, you may at least behave kindly to them, for the sake of such friends, remembering, in connexion with what I have now told you, the old adage you are so fond of—‘Love me, love my dog.’”

Just as Uncle Thomas concluded this story, his listeners were thrown into the utmost confusion, by the cry—“A mouse! A mouse!”

Instantly, the little President sprang from the “omnibus” to the top of the table, and the little girls were mounted upon their chairs, while Harry Williams expostulated and scolded, Mrs. Williams ran for the brush, Charlie was poking with the tongs

under the sideboard, and Uncle Thomas stood by, shaking with laughter.

However, the poor little innocent quadruped fortunately made its escape, and when order was restored, Charlie remarked, that, as Uncle Thomas had a tale for every occasion, maybe, he might tell them a story about a mouse.

“Certainly,” said he; “I have here a very pretty one, and as this is our last evening, I will beg your parents’ permission for you to sit up a little longer, to hear it.” And he then read as follows :

THE MOUSE-TRAP.

I never could exactly make out what Lucy Gray was like :—I used to compare her to a delicate, modest, spring violet, till, unfortunately for the truth of my simile, I once found the little beauty mounted—absolutely mounted—on the back of old Growler, while her foster-sister, with her bushy black hair hanging over her sunburnt forehead, and her large red arms, was tugging and lugging the good-humoured animal along the path that leads to the cow-shed ;

and my lady was shouting and laughing so merrily, that I was quite inclined to quarrel with her for casting aside, even on a bright dewy morning in May, when bird, tree, and flower breathed light and life, that bewitching bashfulness, to which she was indebted for more than half my love.

But what has the title I might be inclined to give Lucy Gray, to do with my story? The little maid was some time since spending a few days at the farm-yard of her old nurse—a sweet spot, about a mile from her father’s vicarage—and had just finished an enormous mess of strawberries and cream, under the assurance that “it would not hurt a new-born babe,” when the good dame’s eldest boy, Robin, popped his bushy head through the half-open door, and with a demure look, which failed to conceal an internal chuckle, said, somewhat mysteriously—“Miss Lucy, sister wants ye.”

The little lady questioned and cross-questioned her foster-brother, to know what was the meaning of his mysterious air—but all to no effect—Robin would answer nothing—but “Sister wants ye—come and see.” And at length off they trotted together, Rob

taking three or four steps, or rather strides, to Lucy's one, and then stopping or running back, like a puppy-dog, to his companion. As he drew near the dairy, he walked more soberly, turning round every now and then, and grinning with a delight, which Lucy had no mode of accounting for.

On entering the dairy, she saw his sister, Fanny, sitting on a water-bucket, her back to the door, and her eyes fixed on a butter-firkin, upon which a mouse-trap was triumphantly placed. Rob's grin expanded, as he took his station opposite his sister; while Fanny seated herself on an old oak chair behind.

"We've caught him nicely. Mother has watched that very mouse for more than a month! that's the fellow that eat the cream-cheese that was for you, Miss," exclaimed Robin with great delight, as he threw himself on the ground, and looked exultingly at the little prisoner.

"Did you ever see a mouse swim, Miss Lucy?" asked Fanny.

"No—never."

"Let's take him to the dike, at the bottom of the

'paddock," said the boy, "and tie a bit of string to his tail, so that he can't get up the ditch."

Rob seized the trap, and was going towards the door, when Lucy, in a firm and decided tone, exclaimed:—"Set down the trap, Robin, I want to speak to you."

Robin looked grave, did as he was bid, and resumed his position. The poor little mouse peeped wistfully through the bars of his prison, and panted, with fear, as if its very heart would break.

"I don't think it *right* either to torture or kill that mouse."

"La, Miss!" cried both the children—"not kill a mouse?"

"No, certainly not: God, Fanny, made that little trembling mouse, as well as you; and papa often says, that we ought to *use* and not *abuse* the powers that are given us."

A long argument then took place between the children, in which my sweet little friend was very nearly beaten, until she bethought her of a mode of reasoning, which, with a solemn look and impressive tone, she laid down like a philosopher.

“Fanny, you know papa preached last Sunday from the text of ‘Do unto others as you would they should do unto you.’ Now, what would you wish to be done to you, if you were in a prison, and great giants watching round you? Would you not long for Brackenwood, for the bright sunshine, and for a merry race up Halscombe Hill? Do, then, to that poor little mouse, as you would wish were done to you—give it its liberty; and believe me, I would rather never eat cream-cheese, than have that little thing drowned in the dike.”

The eloquence of the sweet maiden prevailed. She gazed wistfully upon the prison of the little creature for whose life she had pleaded, and stooped forward as if to tell it that it was safe. The rough country girl looked half ashamed and half sorrowful, as she whimpered “Brother, let the poor thing go;”—and Robin, after another glance at the reprieved culprit, rose to open the trap, and give it freedom.

The prudent little girl, however, suggested the propriety of setting the thief at liberty some distance from the scene of his depredations, and so together they set off to an old limekiln away from the farm

yard—Robin carrying the mouse-trap ; Fanny as the advanced guard ; and my little spring violet—for again I made the comparison—bringing up the rear.

THE PARTING.

There must be an end to everything, and this was the end of Uncle Thomas's Christmas sayings and doings for the year. When the reading was concluded, all the party, old and young, confessed that they had enjoyed a very merry Christmas, and that they were all, as they hoped, a little wiser and a little better, as well as a little happier for their holiday recreations.

There were many plans discussed, for future meetings, both in town and country ; but all felt a little serious when they thought that none of them had any greater security for their lives during another year, than poor dog Dash, that had been almost as frolicsome, and yet as sage, last Christmas, as Uncle Thomas himself—and now ! where was he ?

“ I wish I were an Indian,” said Charlie.

“ Why so ?” inquired his father.

“Because I read, in a book, how he thinks that, when he dies, he goes to the happy hunting-grounds, ‘and that his faithful dog shall bear him company.’”

“Well said, Charlie,” replied the parent; “Uncle Thomas has queer notions on this subject, as well as the Indians; but we cannot talk of them now, for it is long past bed-time.”

Then, was there not a deal of hugging and kissing among the little folks, as they parted to retire for the night!

Next morning, they breakfasted in silence; and when the stage-driver sounded his horn, and Uncle Thomas, with the girls, gave their last kisses and their last good-bye, there was not a dry eye in the group.

When the coach drove off, the family stood watching it, till a bend in the road hid it from view, and then turned towards the hall with heavy hearts. Let us hope that Providence may yet bring them together again. Should that ever be the case, our young readers may be sure that Uncle Thomas will not lose the chance of once more telling his ten millions of little friends of another happy meeting.





